EPIC COLLECTION

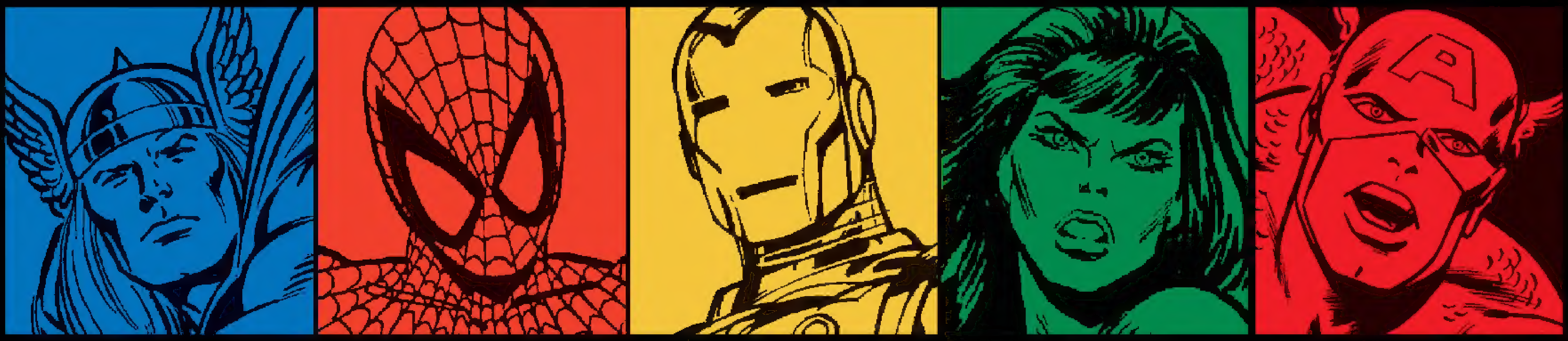
AVENGERS

FEAR THE REAPER

GRUENWALD • HARRAS • KAMINSKI • TRIMPE • EPTING • WYMAN

EPIC COLLECTION

The Epic Collections feature the best characters and stories from Marvel's vast history. Volumes are not published in chronological order — so start your collection today with this edition!



EPIC COLLECTION

AVENGERS

FEAR THE REAPER

WRITERS:
ROY THOMAS, PETER SANDERSON, MARK GRUENWALD, BOB HARRAS & LEN KAMINSKI WITH **GEORGE CARAGONNE, SCOTT BENSON & JOHN LEWANDOWSKI**

PENCILERS:
LARRY ALEXANDER, RICH YANIZESKI, GEOF ISHERWOOD, HERB TRIMPE, KIRK JARVINEN, STEVE EPTING, KEVIN WEST & M.C. WYMAN WITH **KARL ALTSTAETTER, RON LIM & KEVIN KOBASIC**

INKERS:
KATHRYN BOLINGER, FRED FREDERICKS, BRAD VANCATA, TOM PALMER, ARIANE LENSHOEK & BUD LaROSA WITH **RAY KRYSSING, CHARLES BARNETT III, KARL ALTSTAETTER, DAN PANOSIAN & STEVE ALEXANDROV**

COLORISTS:
CHRISTIE SCHEELE, TOM SMITH, GINA GOING, SCOTT MARSHALL, TOM PALMER & MIKE THOMAS WITH **JOHN KALISZ, NEL YOMTOV, SARRA MOSSOFF, ARIANE LENSHOEK & ROB TOKAR**

LETTERERS:
STEVE DUTRO, DAVE SHARPE, RICK PARKER, JANICE CHIANG, BILL OAKLEY & CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

ASSISTANT EDITOR:
PAT GARRAHY

EDITOR:
RALPH MACCHIO

FRONT COVER ARTISTS:
STEVE EPTING, TOM PALMER & VERONICA GANDINI

BACK COVER ARTISTS:
STEVE EPTING & TOM PALMER

AVENGERS CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

COLLECTION EDITOR: MARK D. BEAZLEY
ASSISTANT EDITOR: CAITLIN O'CONNELL
ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR: KATERI WOODY
ASSOCIATE MANAGER, DIGITAL ASSETS: JOE HOCHSTEIN
SENIOR EDITOR, SPECIAL PROJECTS: JENNIFER GRÜNWALD
VP PRODUCTION & SPECIAL PROJECTS: JEFF YOUNGQUIST
RESEARCH & LAYOUT: JEPH YORK
PRODUCTION: COLORTEK & JOE FRONTIRRE

SVP PRINT, SALES & MARKETING: DAVID GABRIEL
DIGITAL MANAGER/PRODUCTION: TIM SMITH 3
DIGITAL PRODUCTION: KOU CHEN & RACHEL YOUNG

EDITOR IN CHIEF: C.B. CEBULSKI
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER: JOE QUESADA
PRESIDENT: DAN BUCKLEY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: ALAN FINE

AVENGERS: FEAR THE REAPER

CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #11, 1992
"AN EPIC ADVENTURE: CITIZEN KANG! PART 1 OF 4"
"BIRTH OF A WARLORD"

THOR ANNUAL #17, 1992
"CITIZEN KANG, PART II: THE HAMMER, THE CROSS — AND THE EYE"
"PARADISE LOST"

FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #25, 1992
"TWICE UPON A TIME..."
"A HALL OF MIRRORS"

AVENGERS ANNUAL #21, 1992
"KANG'S WORLD"
"THE AVENGERS' TOP TEN VILLAINS"
"BOYS' NIGHT OUT!"
"THE PUZZLE"

AVENGERS #348, JUNE 1992
"FAMILIAL CONNECTIONS"

AVENGERS #349, JULY 1992
"DEATH WAGER"

AVENGERS #350, EARLY AUGUST 1992
"REPERCUSSIONS"
"THE BUTLER DID IT!"

AVENGERS #351, LATE AUGUST 1992
"RETRIBUTION!"

AVENGERS #352, EARLY SEPTEMBER 1992
"SON OF DARKNESS"

AVENGERS #353, LATE SEPTEMBER 1992
"TO WAKE THE DEAD"

AVENGERS #354, EARLY OCTOBER 1992
"THE CONQUEROR WORM"

AVENGERS #355, LATE OCTOBER 1992
"WHEN COME THE GATHERERS...!"

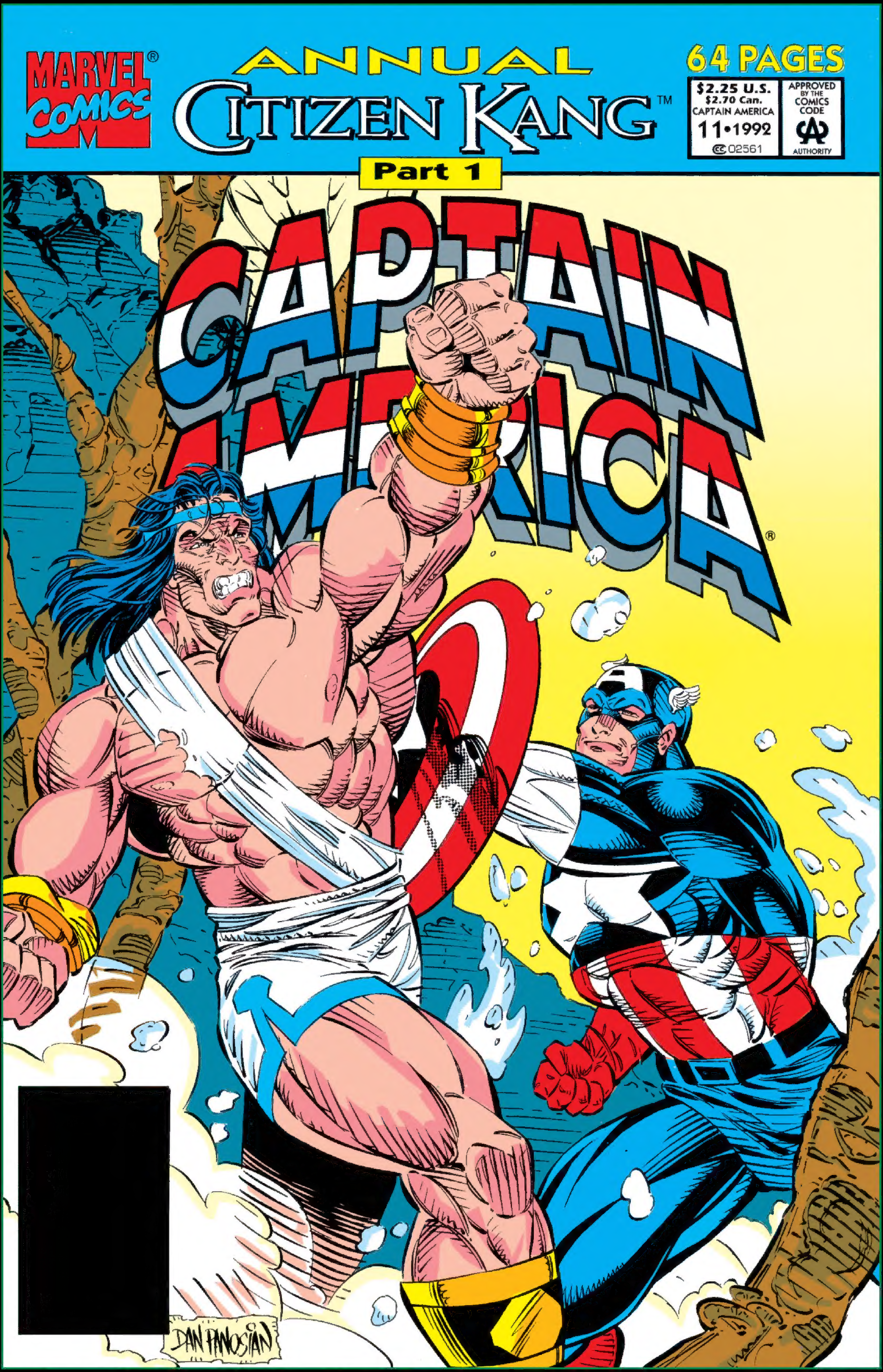
AVENGERS #356, NOVEMBER 1992
"DEATH IN A GATHERING PLACE"

AVENGERS #357, DECEMBER 1992
"THE NIGHT VISITORS"

AVENGERS #358, JANUARY 1993
"ARKON'S ASYLUM"

AVENGERS #359, FEBRUARY 1993
"GIFT OF THE GODS"

© 2019 MARVEL. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.


MARVEL COMICS
ANNUAL
CITIZEN KANG™
Part 1
64 PAGES
$2.25 U.S.
$2.70 Can.
CAPTAIN AMERICA
11•1992
02561
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
CAPTAIN AMERICA
DAN PANOSIAN

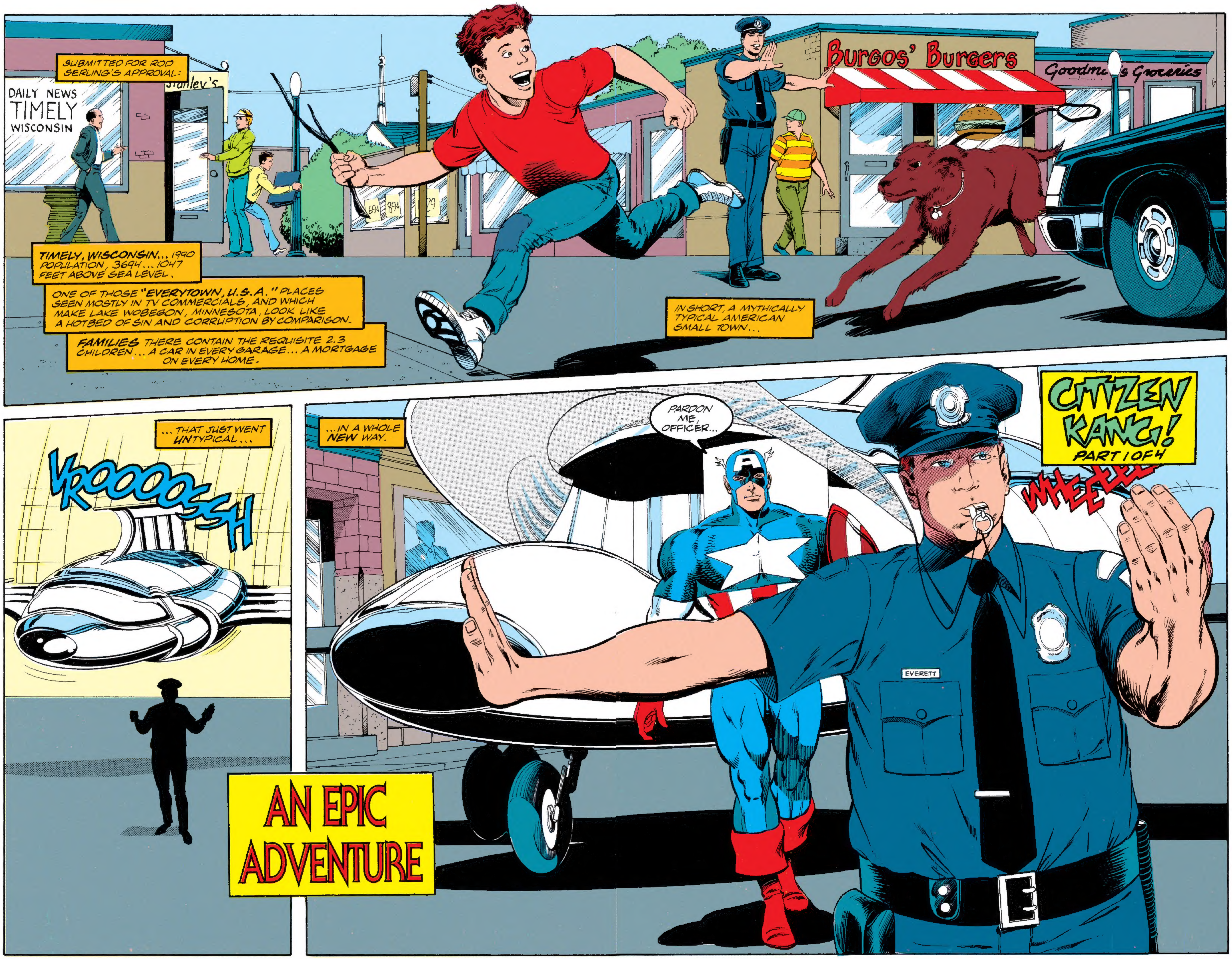
“AN EPIC ADVENTURE”

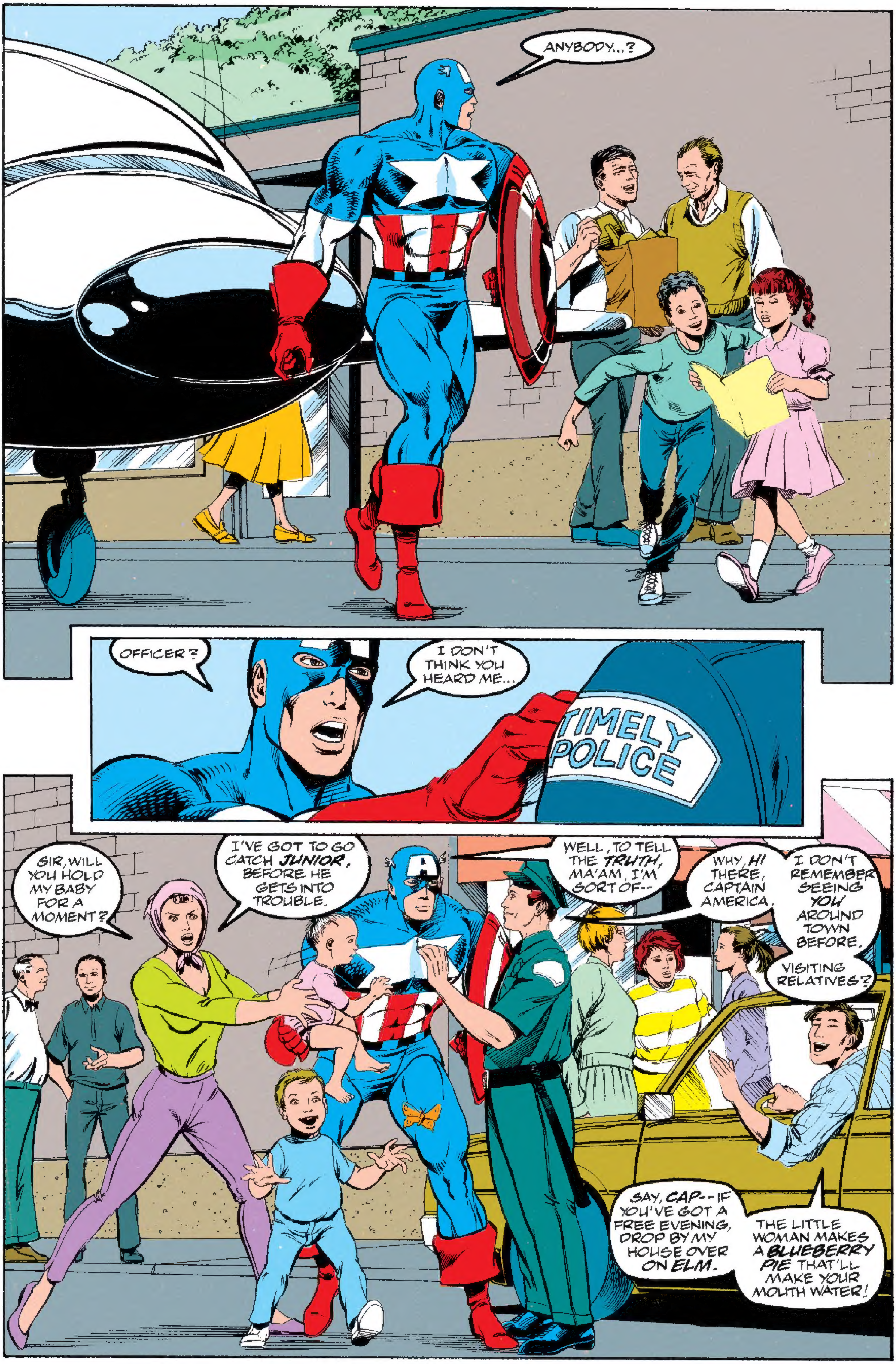
WRITER: ROY THOMAS • PENCILER: LARRY ALEXANDER • INKER: KATHRYN BOLINGER • COLORISTS: CHRISTIE SCHEELE & JOHN KALISZ

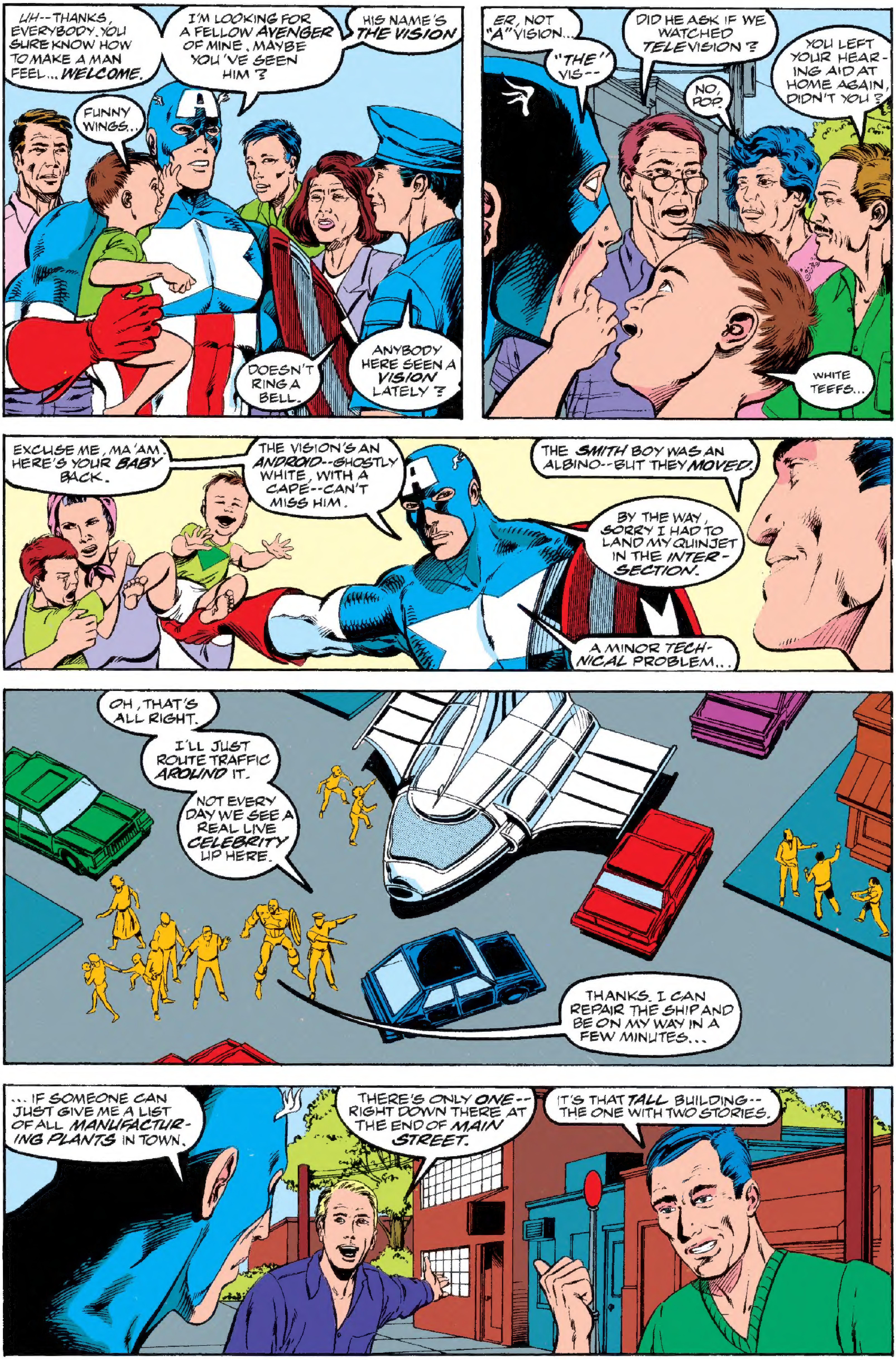
“BIRTH OF A WARLORD”

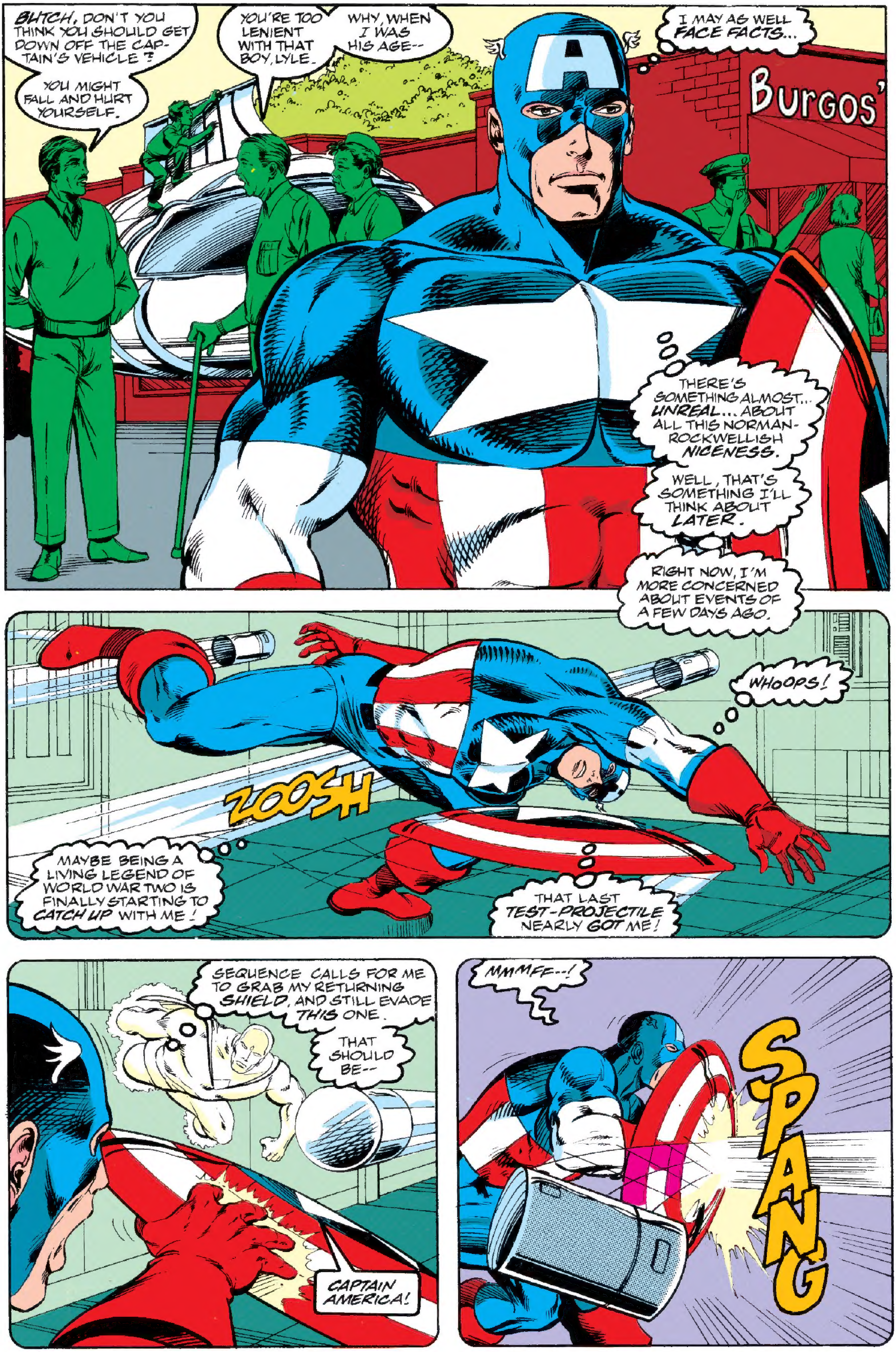
WRITER: PETER SANDERSON • PENCILER: RICH YANIZESKI • INKER: FRED FREDERICKS • COLORIST: CHRISTIE SCHEELE • LETTERER: DAVE SHARPE

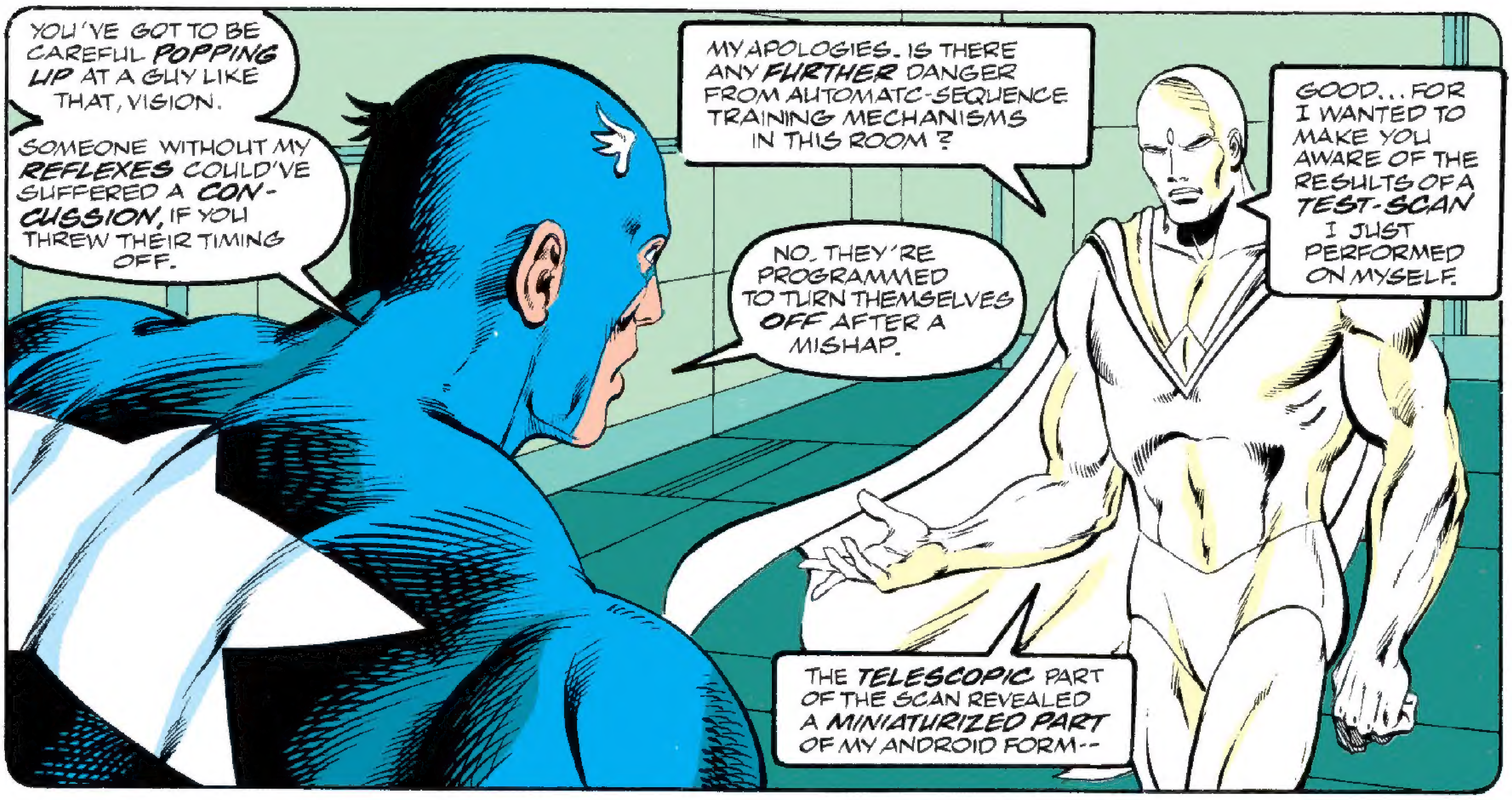
ASSISTANT EDITOR: PAT GARRAHY • EDITOR: RALPH MACCHIO

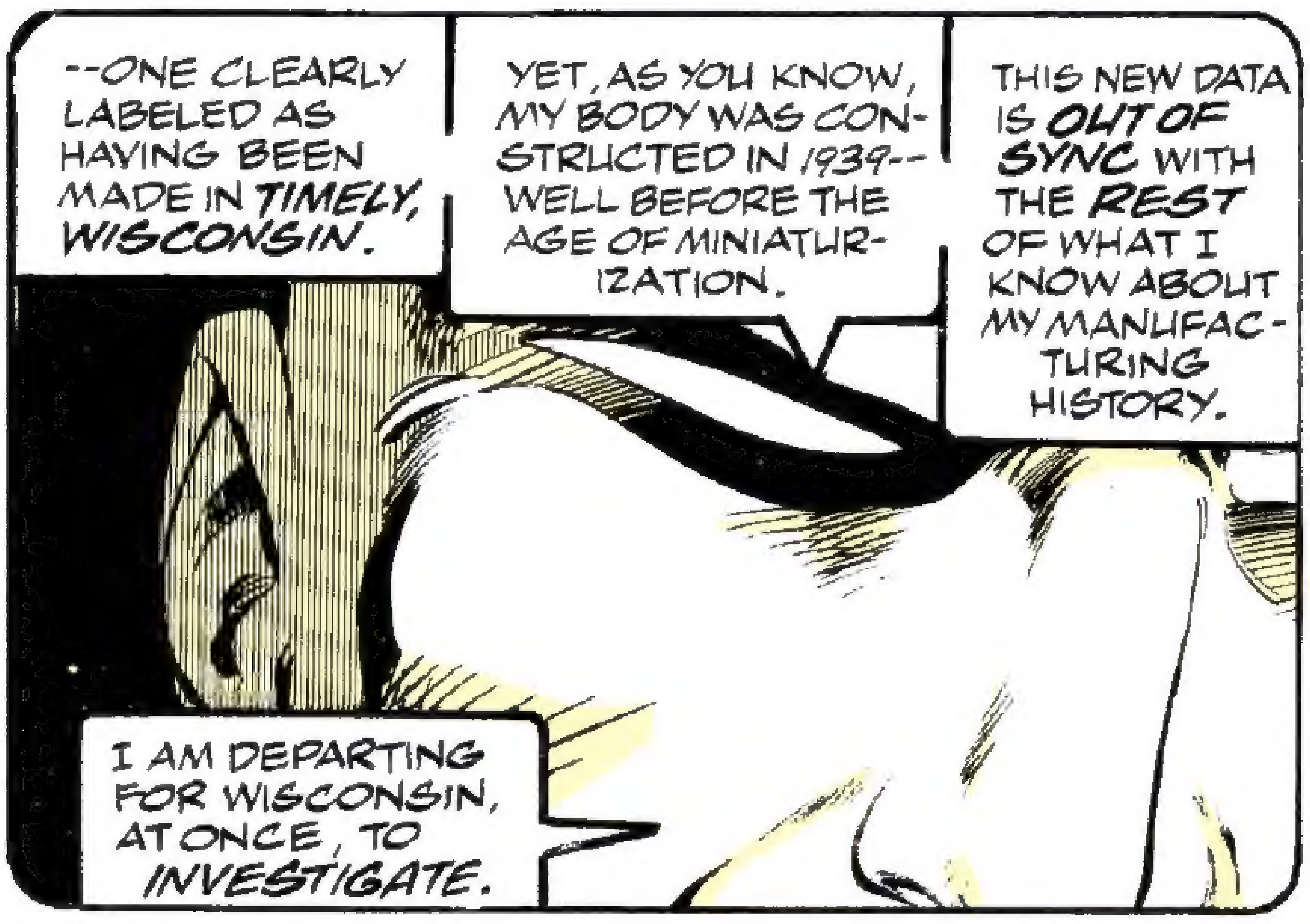

SUBMITTED FOR ROD SERLING'S APPROVAL:
DAILY NEWS
TIMELY
WISCONSIN
Stanley's
69¢ 89¢ 29
TIMELY, WISCONSIN... 1990
POPULATION, 3694... 1047 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL.
ONE OF THOSE "EVERYTOWN, U.S.A." PLACES SEEN MOSTLY IN TV COMMERCIALS, AND WHICH MAKE LAKE WOBEGON, MINNESOTA, LOOK LIKE A HOTBED OF SIN AND CORRUPTION BY COMPARISON.
FAMILIES THERE CONTAIN THE REQUISITE 2.3 CHILDREN... A CAR IN EVERY GARAGE... A MORTGAGE ON EVERY HOME.
Burgos' Burgers
Goodm s Groceries
IN SHORT, A MYTHICALLY TYPICAL AMERICAN SMALL TOWN...
...THAT JUST WENT UNTYPICAL...
VROOOOOSSH
AN EPIC ADVENTURE
...IN A WHOLE NEW WAY.
PARDON ME, OFFICER...
WHEEEEE
EVERETT
CITIZEN KANG!
PART 1 OF 4

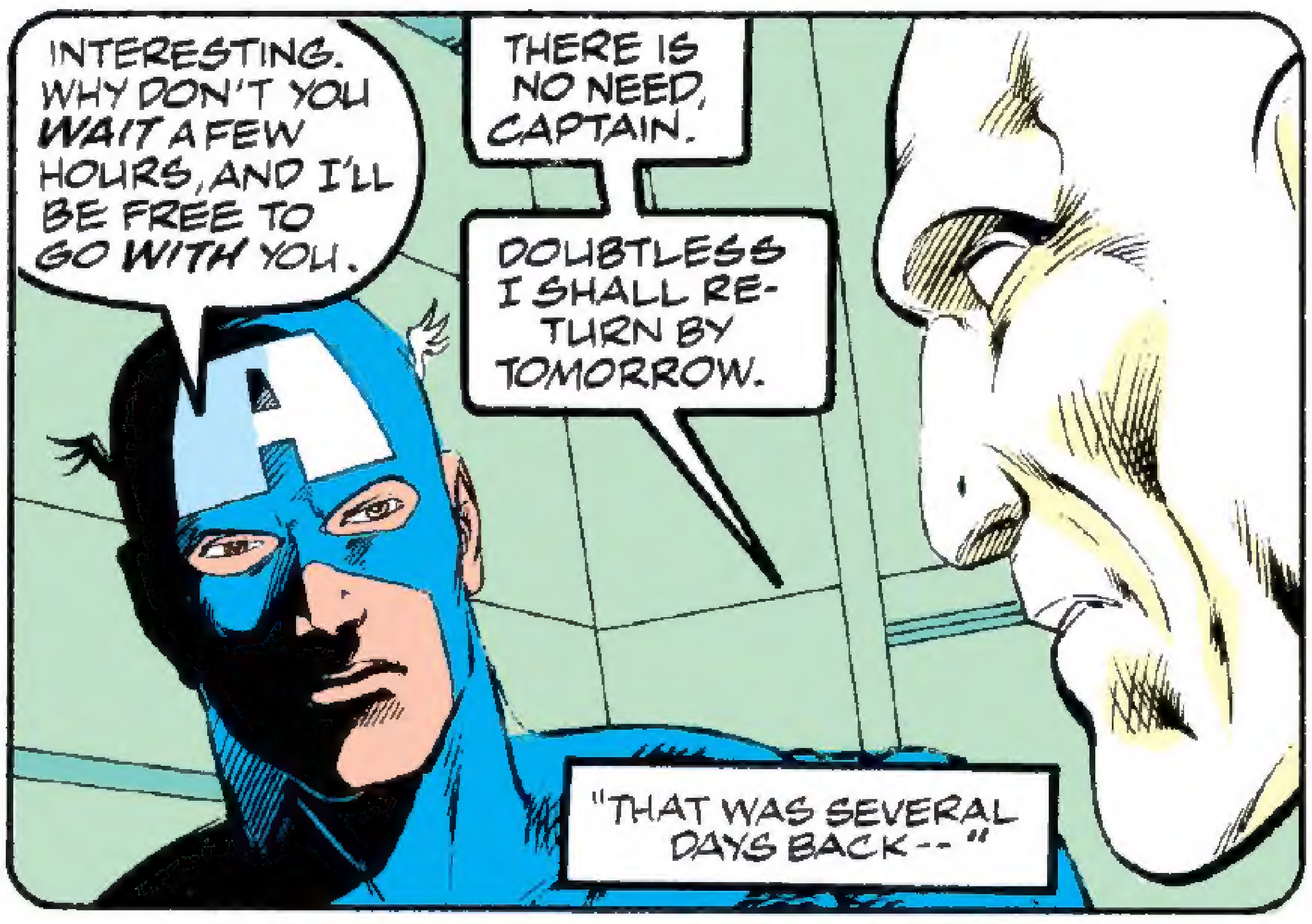

ANYBODY...?
OFFICER?
I DON'T THINK YOU HEARD ME...
TIMELY POLICE
SIR, WILL YOU HOLD MY BABY FOR A MOMENT?
I'VE GOT TO GO CATCH **JUNIOR**, BEFORE HE GETS INTO TROUBLE.
WELL, TO TELL THE **TRUTH**, MA'AM, I'M SORT OF--
WHY, **HI** THERE, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
I DON'T REMEMBER SEEING **YOU** AROUND TOWN BEFORE.
VISITING RELATIVES?
SAY, **CAP**-- IF YOU'VE GOT A FREE EVENING, DROP BY MY HOUSE OVER **ON ELM**.
THE LITTLE WOMAN MAKES A **BLUEBERRY PIE** THAT'LL MAKE YOUR MOUTH WATER!

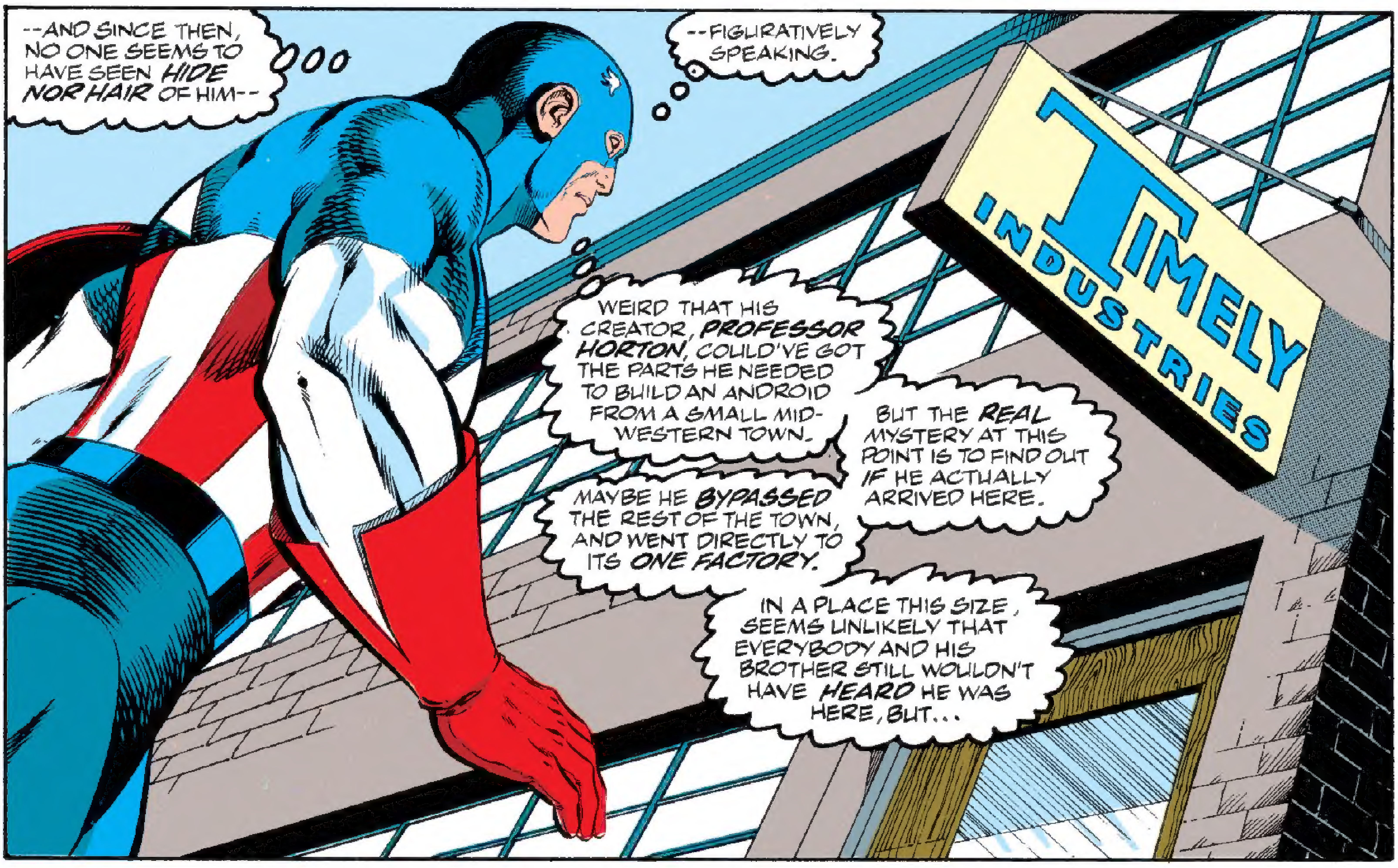

UH--THANKS, EVERYBODY. YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO MAKE A MAN FEEL... WELCOME.
I'M LOOKING FOR A FELLOW AVENGER OF MINE. MAYBE YOU'VE SEEN HIM ?
HIS NAME'S THE VISION.
FUNNY WINGS...
DOESN'T RING A BELL.
ANYBODY HERE SEEN A VISION LATELY ?
ER, NOT "A" VISION...
"THE" VIS--
DID HE ASK IF WE WATCHED TELEVISION ?
NO, POP.
YOU LEFT YOUR HEARING AID AT HOME AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU ?
WHITE TEEFS...
EXCUSE ME, MA'AM. HERE'S YOUR BABY BACK.
THE VISION'S AN ANDROID--GHOSTLY WHITE, WITH A CAPE--CAN'T MISS HIM.
THE SMITH BOY WAS AN ALBINO--BUT THEY MOVED.
BY THE WAY, SORRY I HAD TO LAND MY QUINJET IN THE INTERSECTION.
A MINOR TECHNICAL PROBLEM...
OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'LL JUST ROUTE TRAFFIC AROUND IT.
NOT EVERY DAY WE SEE A REAL LIVE CELEBRITY UP HERE.
THANKS. I CAN REPAIR THE SHIP AND BE ON MY WAY IN A FEW MINUTES...
... IF SOMEONE CAN JUST GIVE ME A LIST OF ALL MANUFACTURING PLANTS IN TOWN.
THERE'S ONLY ONE-- RIGHT DOWN THERE AT THE END OF MAIN STREET.
IT'S THAT TALL BUILDING-- THE ONE WITH TWO STORIES.

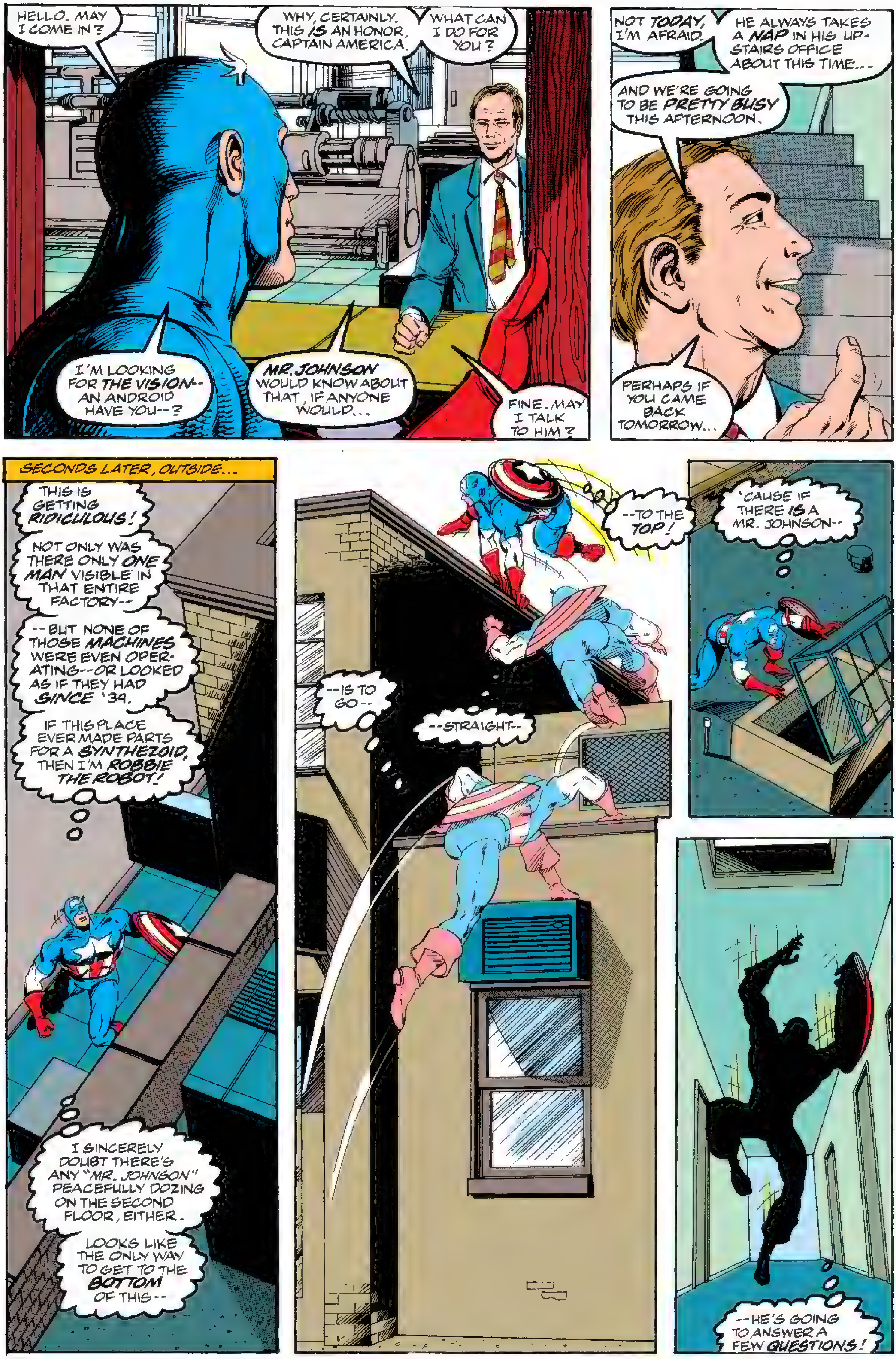

BUTCH, DON'T YOU THINK YOU SHOULD GET DOWN OFF THE CAPTAIN'S VEHICLE?
YOU MIGHT FALL AND HURT YOURSELF.
YOU'RE TOO LENIENT WITH THAT BOY, LYLE.
WHY, WHEN I WAS HIS AGE--
I MAY AS WELL FACE FACTS...
Burgos'
THERE'S SOMETHING ALMOST... UNREAL... ABOUT ALL THIS NORMAN-ROCKWELLISH NICENESS.
WELL, THAT'S SOMETHING I'LL THINK ABOUT LATER.
RIGHT NOW, I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT EVENTS OF A FEW DAYS AGO.
WHOOPS!
ZOOSH
MAYBE BEING A LIVING LEGEND OF WORLD WAR TWO IS FINALLY STARTING TO CATCH UP WITH ME!
THAT LAST TEST-PROJECTILE NEARLY GOT ME!
SEQUENCE CALLS FOR ME TO GRAB MY RETURNING SHIELD, AND STILL EVADE THIS ONE.
THAT SHOULD BE--
CAPTAIN AMERICA!
MMMFF--!
SPANG

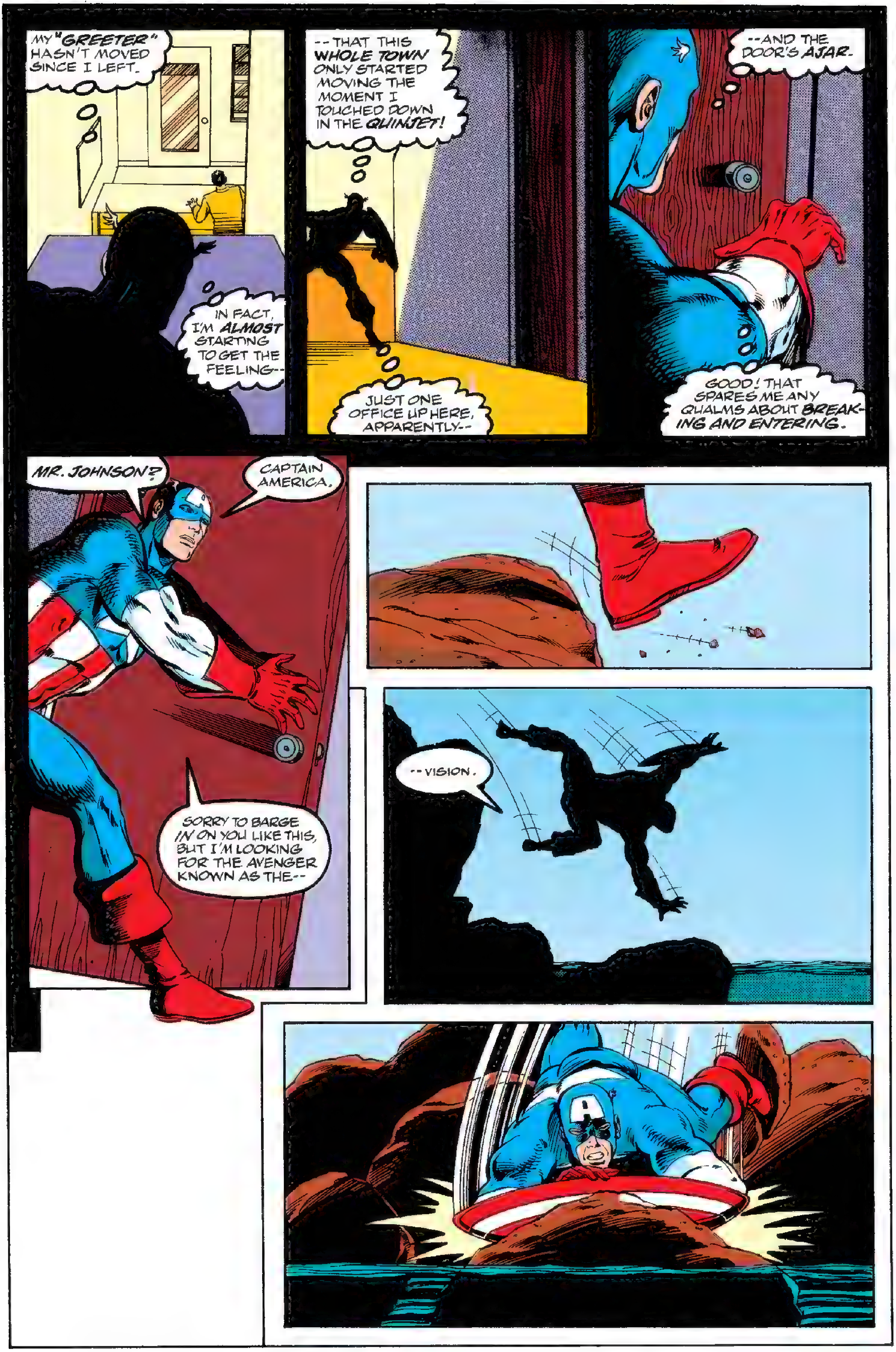

YOU'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL POPPING UP AT A GUY LIKE THAT, VISION.
SOMEONE WITHOUT MY REFLEXES COULD'VE SUFFERED A CONCUSSION, IF YOU THREW THEIR TIMING OFF.
MY APOLOGIES. IS THERE ANY FURTHER DANGER FROM AUTOMATC-SEQUENCE TRAINING MECHANISMS IN THIS ROOM?
NO. THEY'RE PROGRAMMED TO TURN THEMSELVES OFF AFTER A MISHAP.
GOOD... FOR I WANTED TO MAKE YOU AWARE OF THE RESULTS OF A TEST-SCAN I JUST PERFORMED ON MYSELF.
THE TELESCOPIC PART OF THE SCAN REVEALED A MINIATURIZED PART OF MY ANDROID FORM--

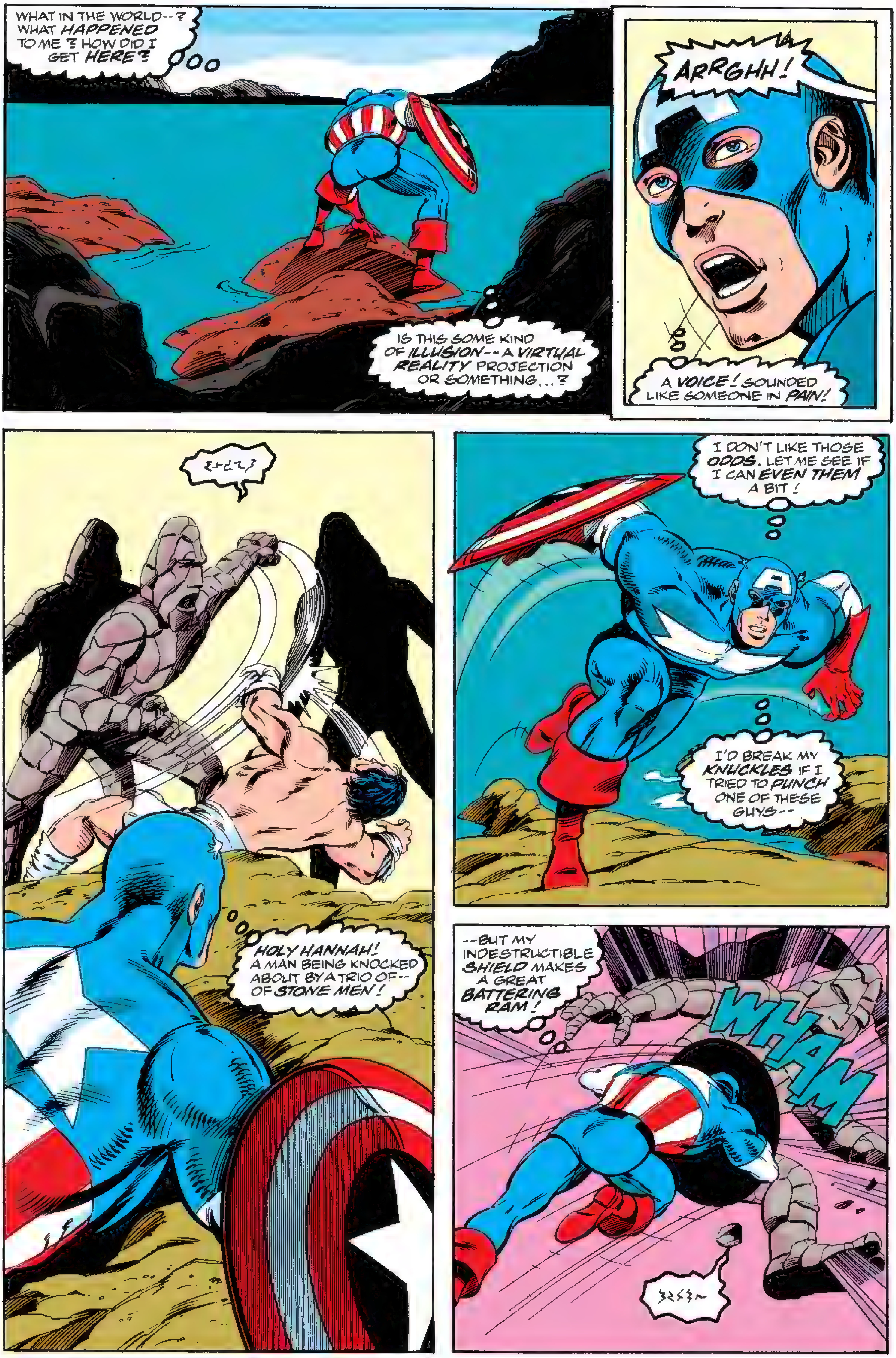

--ONE CLEARLY LABELED AS HAVING BEEN MADE IN TIMELY, WISCONSIN.
YET, AS YOU KNOW, MY BODY WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1939-- WELL BEFORE THE AGE OF MINIATURIZATION.
THIS NEW DATA IS OUT OF SYNC WITH THE REST OF WHAT I KNOW ABOUT MY MANUFACTURING HISTORY.
I AM DEPARTING FOR WISCONSIN, AT ONCE, TO INVESTIGATE.

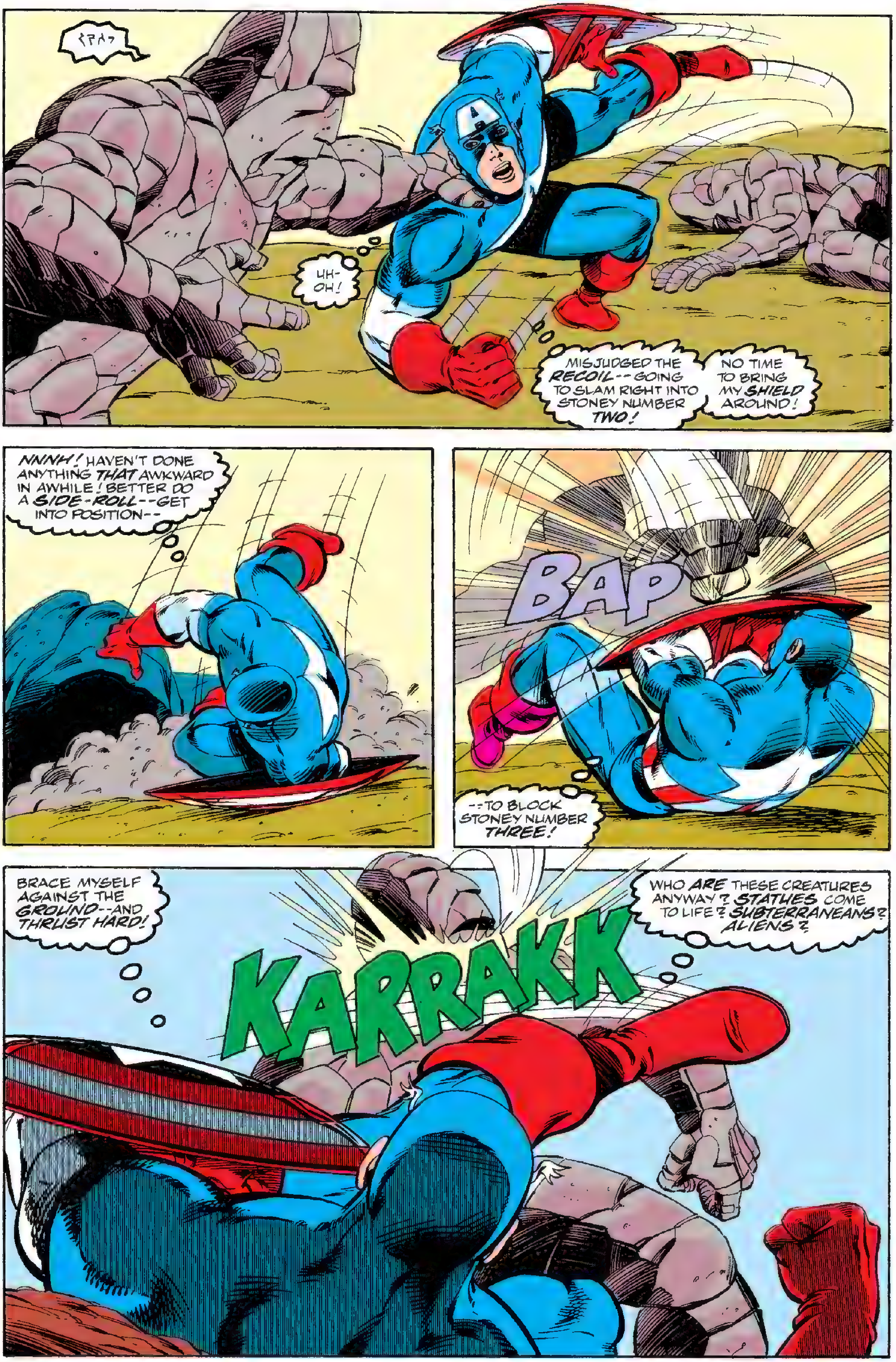

INTERESTING. WHY DON'T YOU WAIT A FEW HOURS, AND I'LL BE FREE TO GO WITH YOU.
THERE IS NO NEED, CAPTAIN.
DOUBTLESS I SHALL RETURN BY TOMORROW.
"THAT WAS SEVERAL DAYS BACK--"

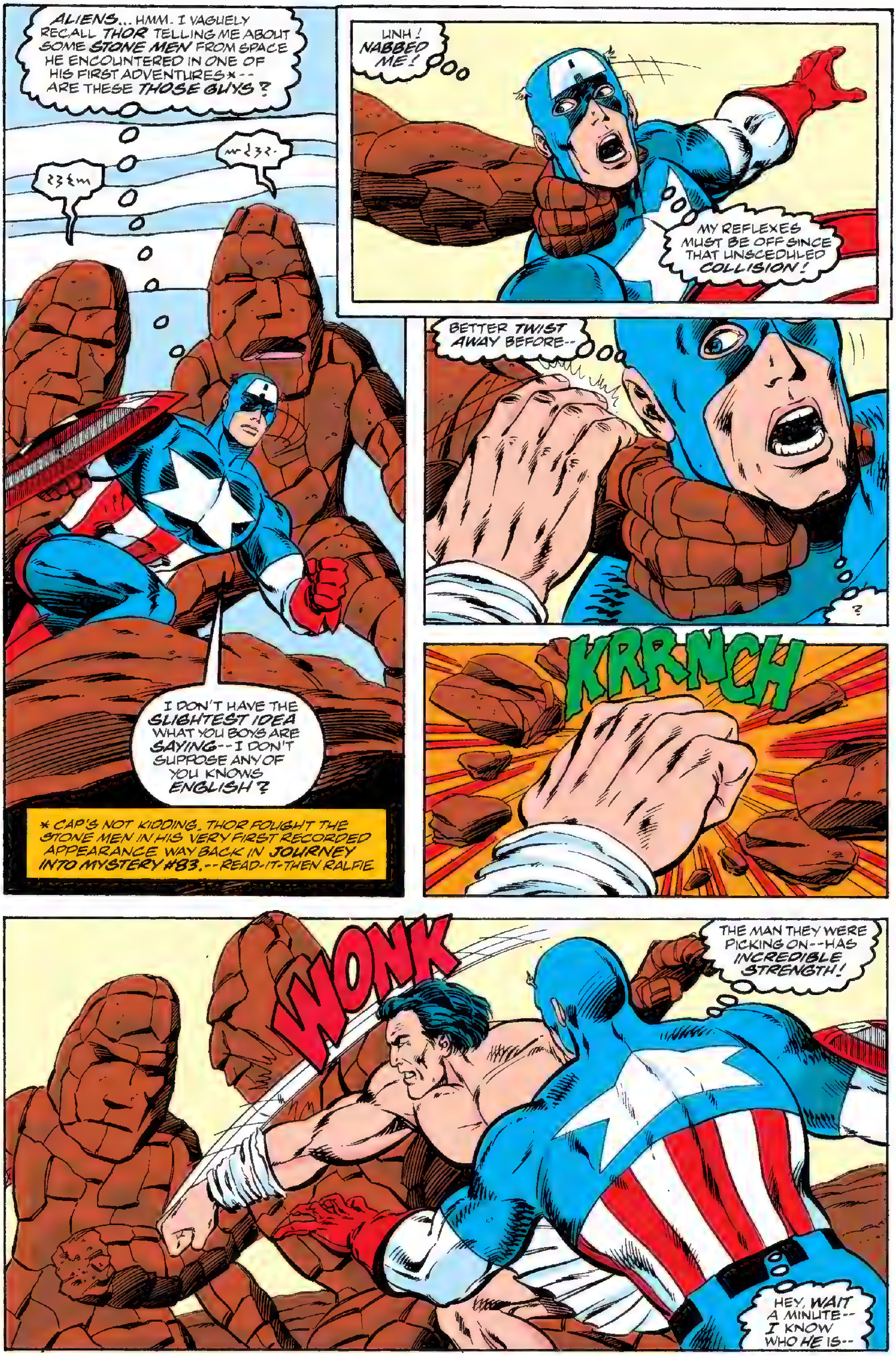

--AND SINCE THEN, NO ONE SEEMS TO HAVE SEEN HIDE NOR HAIR OF HIM--
--FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING.
TIMELY INDUSTRIES
WEIRD THAT HIS CREATOR, PROFESSOR HORTON, COULD'VE GOT THE PARTS HE NEEDED TO BUILD AN ANDROID FROM A SMALL MIDWESTERN TOWN.
BUT THE REAL MYSTERY AT THIS POINT IS TO FIND OUT IF HE ACTUALLY ARRIVED HERE.
MAYBE HE BYPASSED THE REST OF THE TOWN, AND WENT DIRECTLY TO ITS ONE FACTORY.
IN A PLACE THIS SIZE, SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT EVERYBODY AND HIS BROTHER STILL WOULDN'T HAVE HEARD HE WAS HERE, BUT...

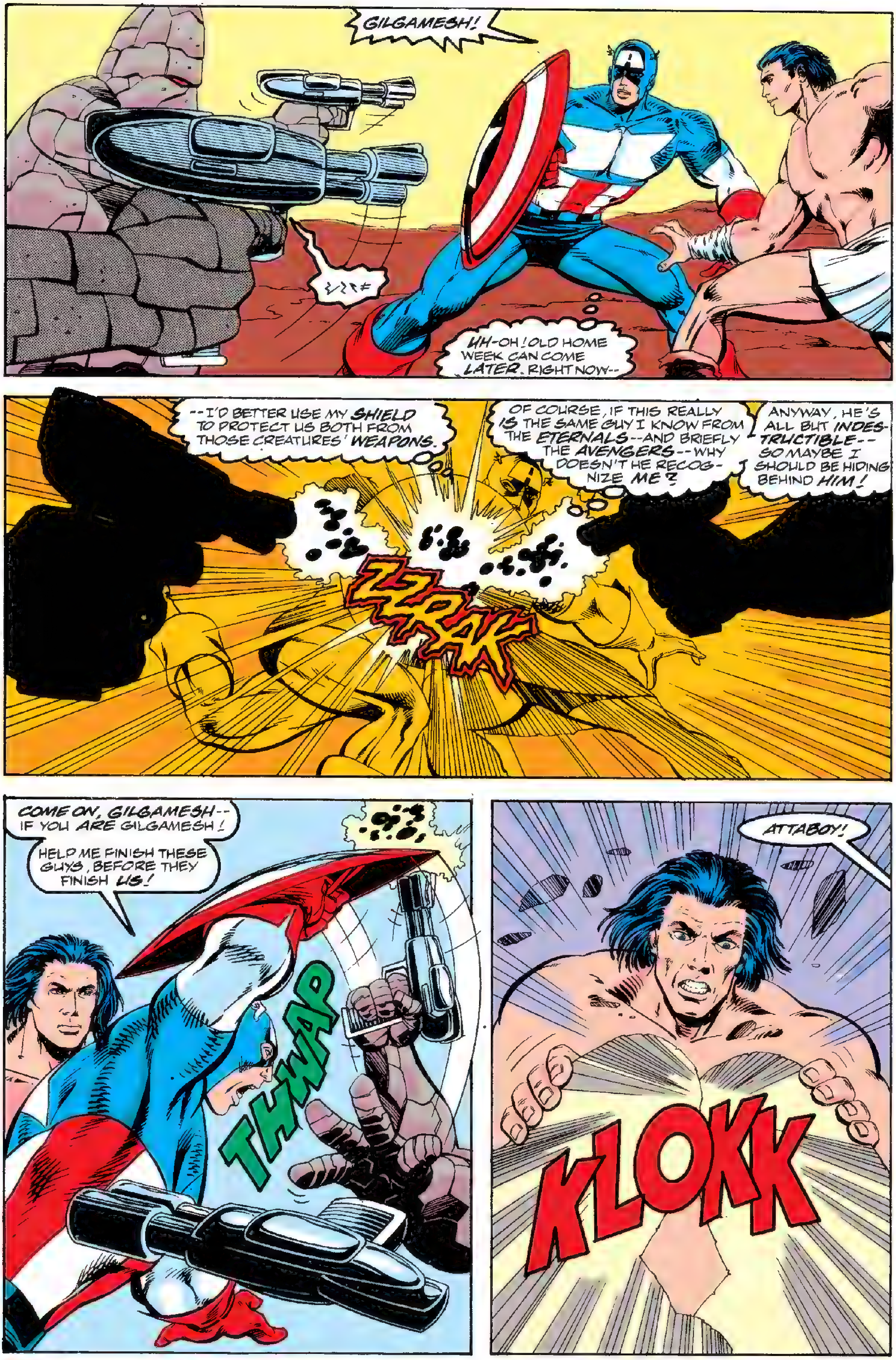

HELLO. MAY I COME IN?
WHY, CERTAINLY. THIS *IS* AN HONOR, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I'M LOOKING FOR *THE VISION*-- AN ANDROID HAVE YOU--?
MR. JOHNSON WOULD KNOW ABOUT THAT, IF ANYONE WOULD...
FINE. MAY I TALK TO HIM?
NOT *TODAY*, I'M AFRAID.
HE ALWAYS TAKES A *NAP* IN HIS UPSTAIRS OFFICE ABOUT THIS TIME...
AND WE'RE GOING TO BE *PRETTY BUSY* THIS AFTERNOON.
PERHAPS IF YOU CAME BACK TOMORROW...
SECONDS LATER, OUTSIDE...
THIS IS GETTING *RIDICULOUS!*
NOT ONLY WAS THERE ONLY *ONE MAN* VISIBLE IN THAT ENTIRE FACTORY--
--BUT NONE OF THOSE *MACHINES* WERE EVEN OPERATING--OR LOOKED AS IF THEY HAD *SINCE* '39.
IF THIS PLACE EVER MADE PARTS FOR A *SYNTHEZOID*, THEN I'M *ROBBIE THE ROBOT!*
I SINCERELY DOUBT THERE'S ANY "MR. JOHNSON" PEACEFULLY DOZING ON THE SECOND FLOOR, EITHER.
LOOKS LIKE THE ONLY WAY TO GET TO THE *BOTTOM* OF THIS--
--IS TO GO--
--STRAIGHT--
--TO THE *TOP!*
'CAUSE IF THERE *IS* A MR. JOHNSON--
--HE'S GOING TO ANSWER A FEW *QUESTIONS!*

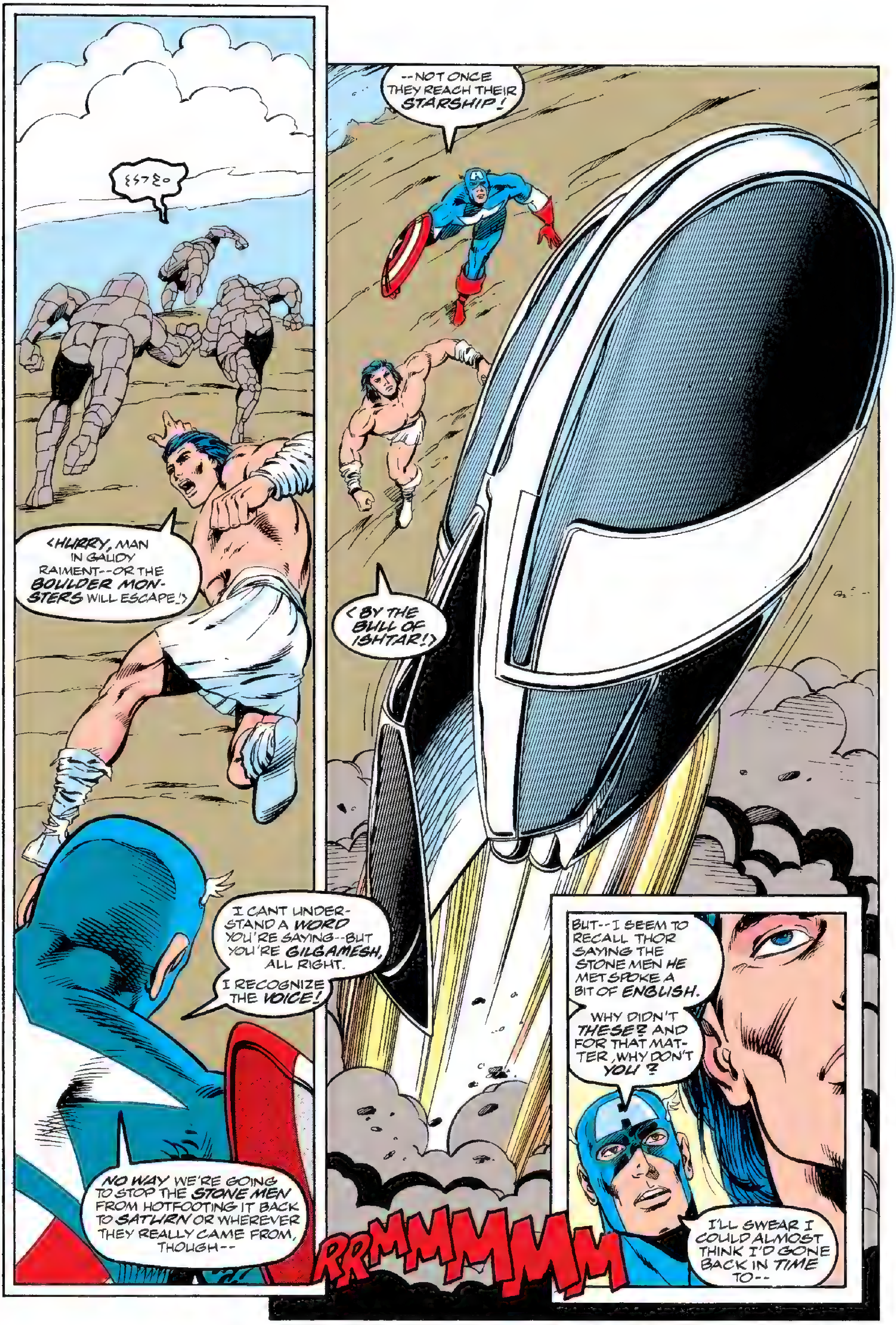

MY "GREETER" HASN'T MOVED SINCE I LEFT.
IN FACT, I'M ALMOST STARTING TO GET THE FEELING--
--THAT THIS WHOLE TOWN ONLY STARTED MOVING THE MOMENT I TOUCHED DOWN IN THE QUINJET!
JUST ONE OFFICE UP HERE, APPARENTLY--
--AND THE DOOR'S AJAR.
GOOD! THAT SPARES ME ANY QUALMS ABOUT BREAKING AND ENTERING.
MR. JOHNSON?
CAPTAIN AMERICA.
SORRY TO BARGE IN ON YOU LIKE THIS, BUT I'M LOOKING FOR THE AVENGER KNOWN AS THE--
--VISION.

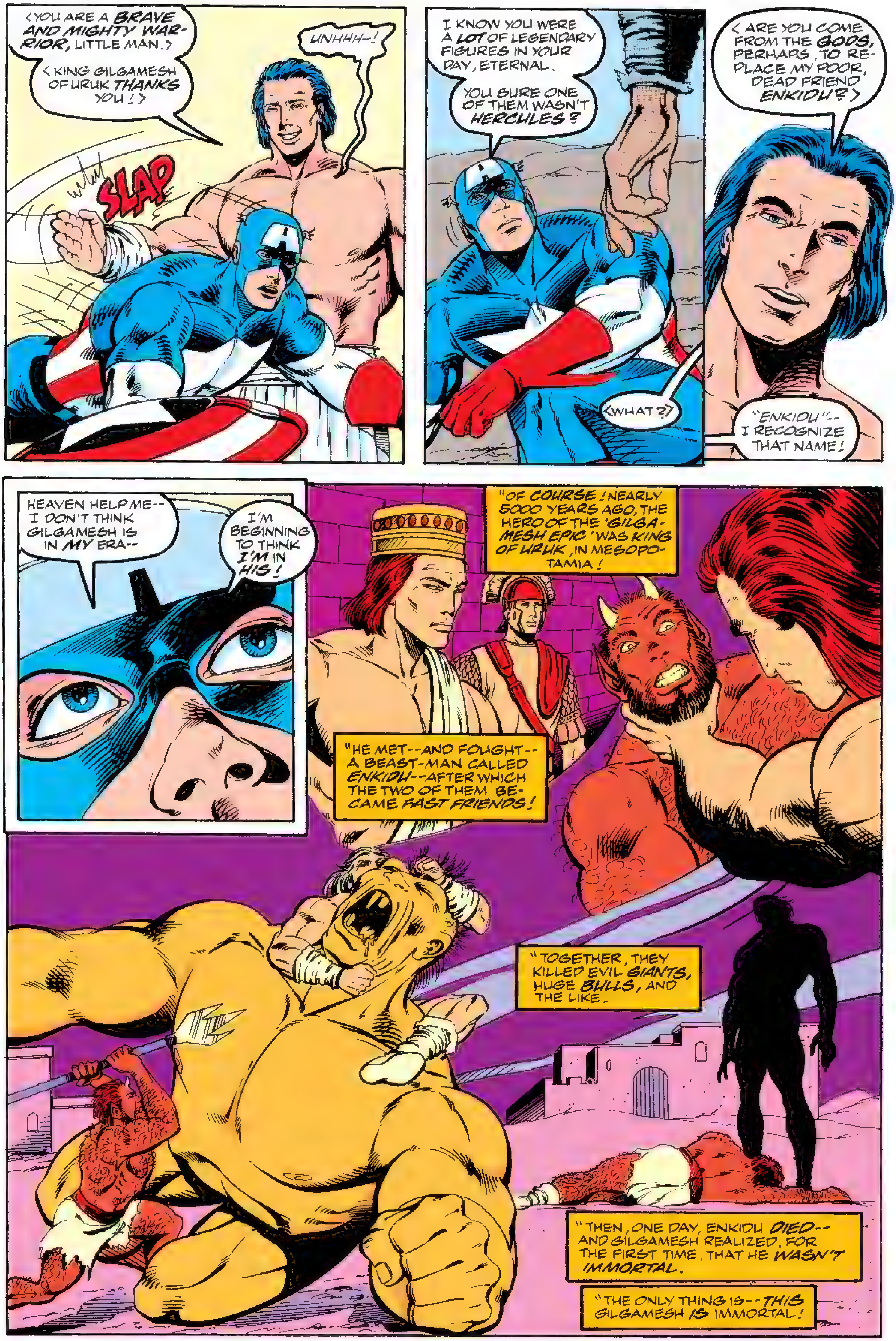

WHAT IN THE WORLD--? WHAT *HAPPENED* TO ME? HOW DID I GET *HERE*?
IS THIS SOME KIND OF *ILLUSION*--A *VIRTUAL REALITY* PROJECTION OR SOMETHING...?
ARRGHH!
A *VOICE!* SOUNDED LIKE SOMEONE IN *PAIN!*
HOLY HANNAH! A MAN BEING KNOCKED ABOUT BY A TRIO OF-- OF *STONE MEN!*
I DON'T LIKE THOSE *ODDS.* LET ME SEE IF I CAN *EVEN THEM* A BIT!
I'D BREAK MY *KNUCKLES* IF I TRIED TO *PUNCH* ONE OF THESE GUYS--
--BUT MY INDESTRUCTIBLE *SHIELD* MAKES A GREAT *BATTERING RAM!*
WHAM

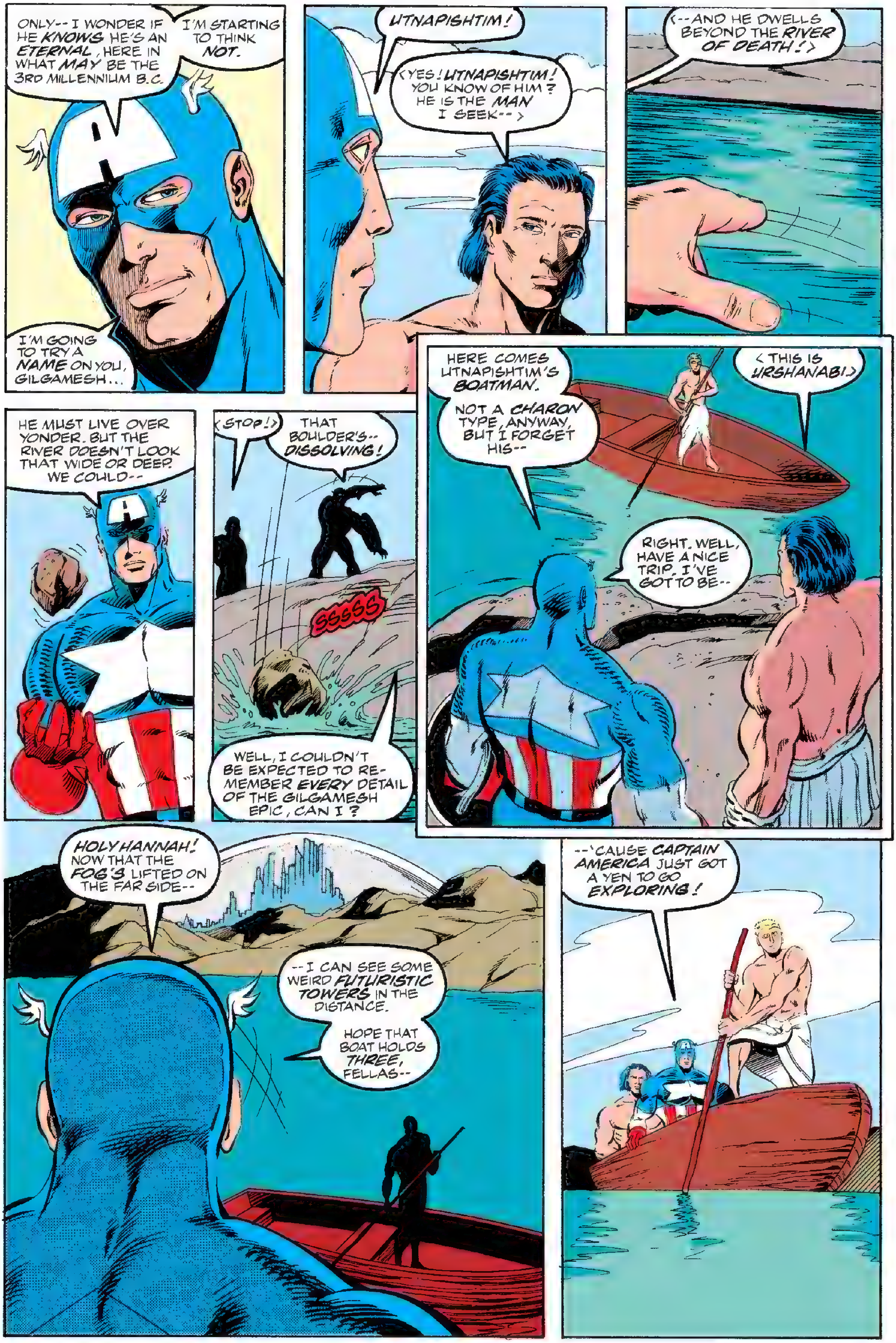

UH-OH!
MISJUDGED THE *RECOIL*--GOING TO SLAM RIGHT INTO STONEY NUMBER *TWO!*
NO TIME TO BRING MY *SHIELD* AROUND!
NNNH! HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING *THAT* AWKWARD IN AWHILE! BETTER DO A *SIDE-ROLL*--GET INTO POSITION--
BAP
--TO BLOCK STONEY NUMBER *THREE!*
BRACE MYSELF AGAINST THE *GROUND*--AND *THRUST HARD!*
KARRAKK
WHO *ARE* THESE CREATURES ANYWAY? *STATUES* COME TO LIFE? *SUBTERRANEANS?* *ALIENS?*

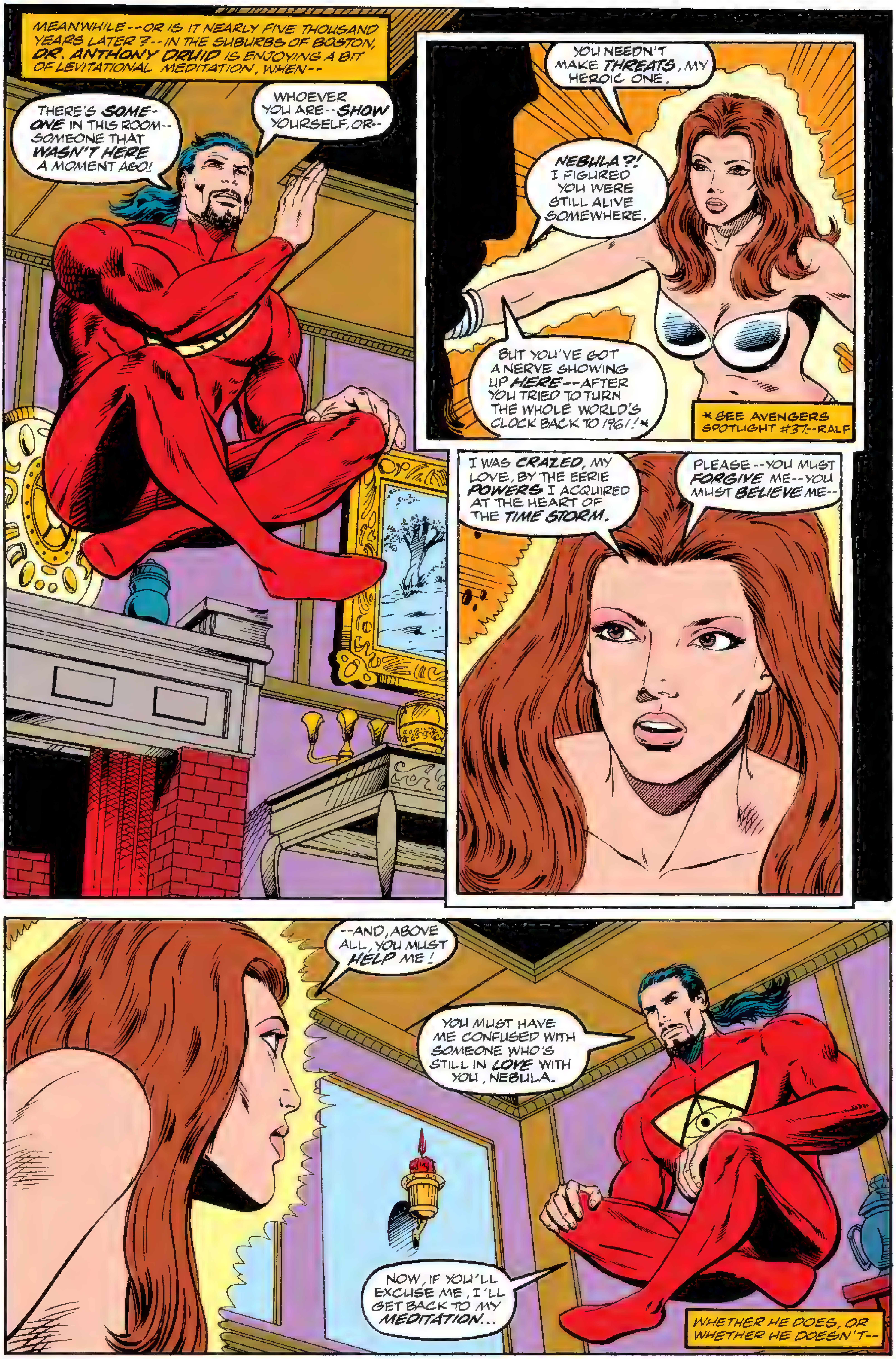

ALIENS... HMM. I VAGUELY RECALL THOR TELLING ME ABOUT SOME STONE MEN FROM SPACE HE ENCOUNTERED IN ONE OF HIS FIRST ADVENTURES* -- ARE THESE THOSE GUYS?
I DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHAT YOU BOYS ARE SAYING -- I DON'T SUPPOSE ANY OF YOU KNOWS ENGLISH?
* CAP'S NOT KIDDING. THOR FOUGHT THE STONE MEN IN HIS VERY FIRST RECORDED APPEARANCE WAY BACK IN JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #83. -- READ-IT-THEN RALFIE
UNH! NABBED ME!
MY REFLEXES MUST BE OFF SINCE THAT UNSCEDULED COLLISION!
BETTER TWIST AWAY BEFORE--
?
KRRNCH
WONK
THE MAN THEY WERE PICKING ON -- HAS INCREDIBLE STRENGTH!
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE -- I KNOW WHO HE IS--

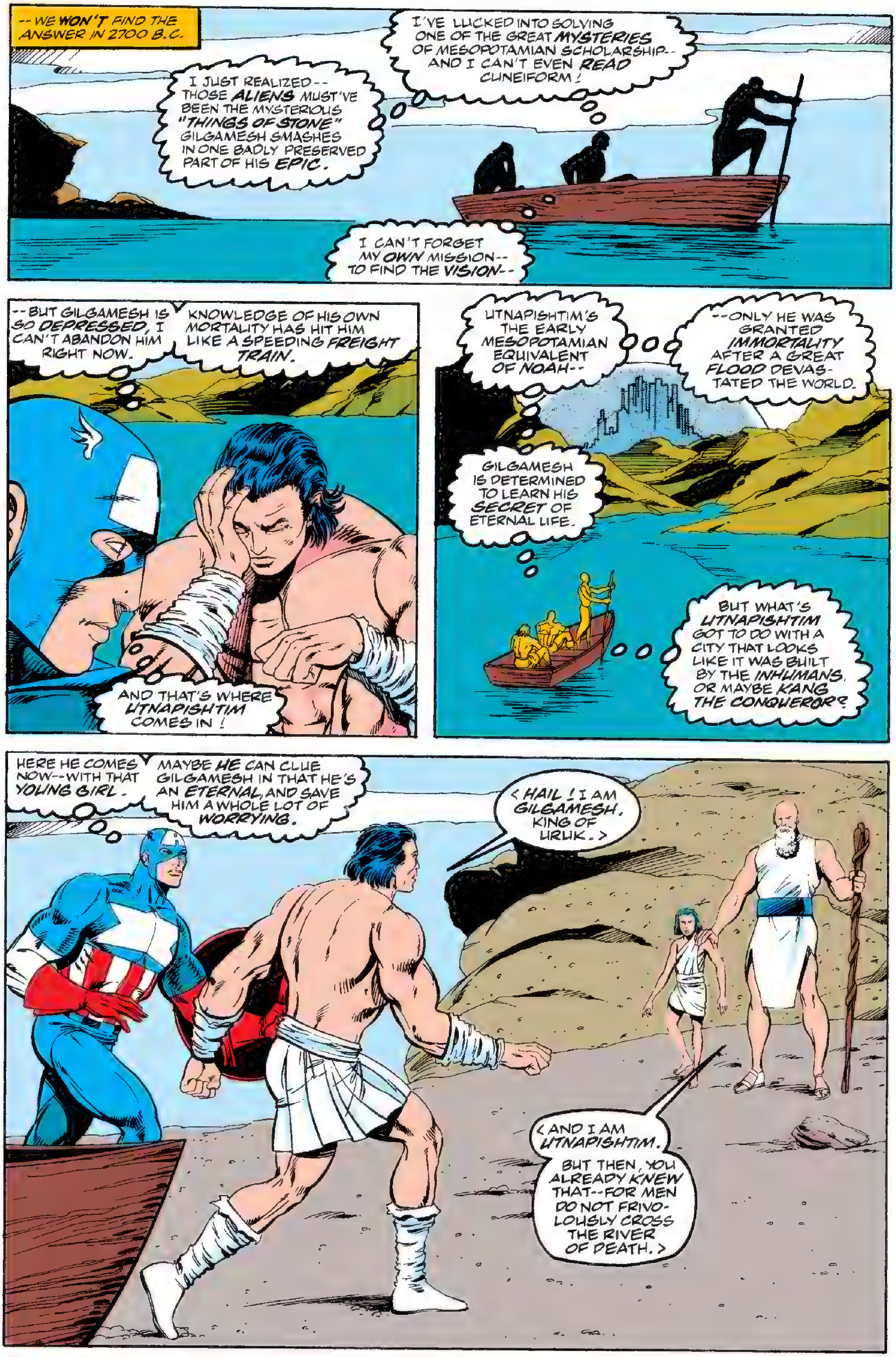

GILGAMESH!
UH-OH! OLD HOME WEEK CAN COME LATER. RIGHT NOW--
--I'D BETTER USE MY SHIELD TO PROTECT US BOTH FROM THOSE CREATURES' WEAPONS.
OF COURSE, IF THIS REALLY IS THE SAME GUY I KNOW FROM THE ETERNALS--AND BRIEFLY THE AVENGERS--WHY DOESN'T HE RECOGNIZE ME?
ANYWAY, HE'S ALL BUT INDESTRUCTIBLE--SO MAYBE I SHOULD BE HIDING BEHIND HIM!
ZZRAK
COME ON, GILGAMESH--IF YOU ARE GILGAMESH!
HELP ME FINISH THESE GUYS, BEFORE THEY FINISH US!
THWAP
ATTABOY!
KLOKK

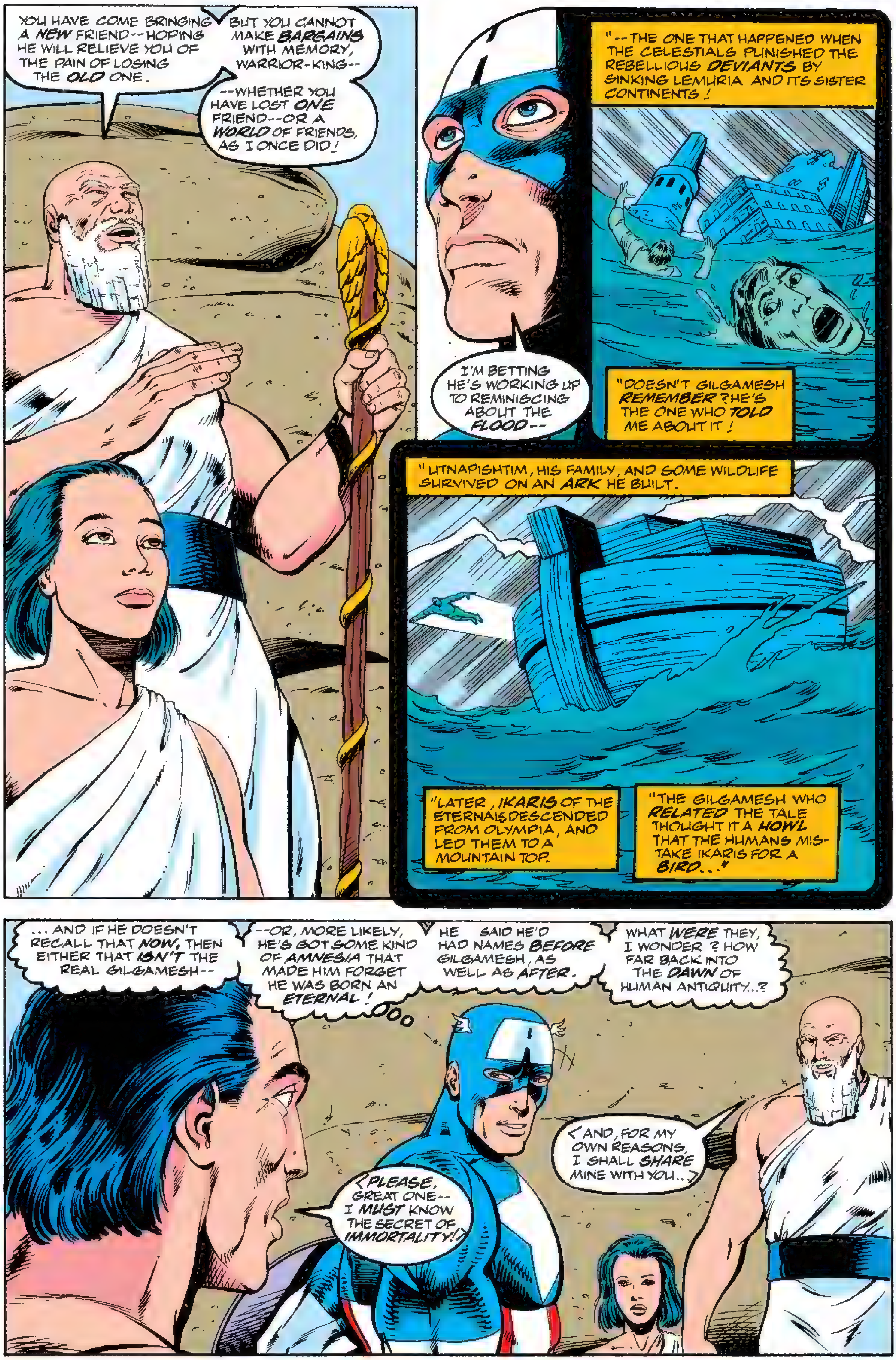

<HURRY, MAN IN GAUDY RAIMENT--OR THE BOULDER MONSTERS WILL ESCAPE!>
I CANT UNDERSTAND A WORD YOU'RE SAYING--BUT YOU'RE GILGAMESH, ALL RIGHT.
I RECOGNIZE THE VOICE!
NO WAY WE'RE GOING TO STOP THE STONE MEN FROM HOTFOOTING IT BACK TO SATURN OR WHEREVER THEY REALLY CAME FROM, THOUGH--
--NOT ONCE THEY REACH THEIR STARSHIP!
<BY THE BULL OF ISHTAR!>
RRMMMMMM
BUT--I SEEM TO RECALL THOR SAYING THE STONE MEN HE MET SPOKE A BIT OF ENGLISH.
WHY DIDN'T THESE? AND FOR THAT MATTER, WHY DON'T YOU?
I'LL SWEAR I COULD ALMOST THINK I'D GONE BACK IN TIME TO--

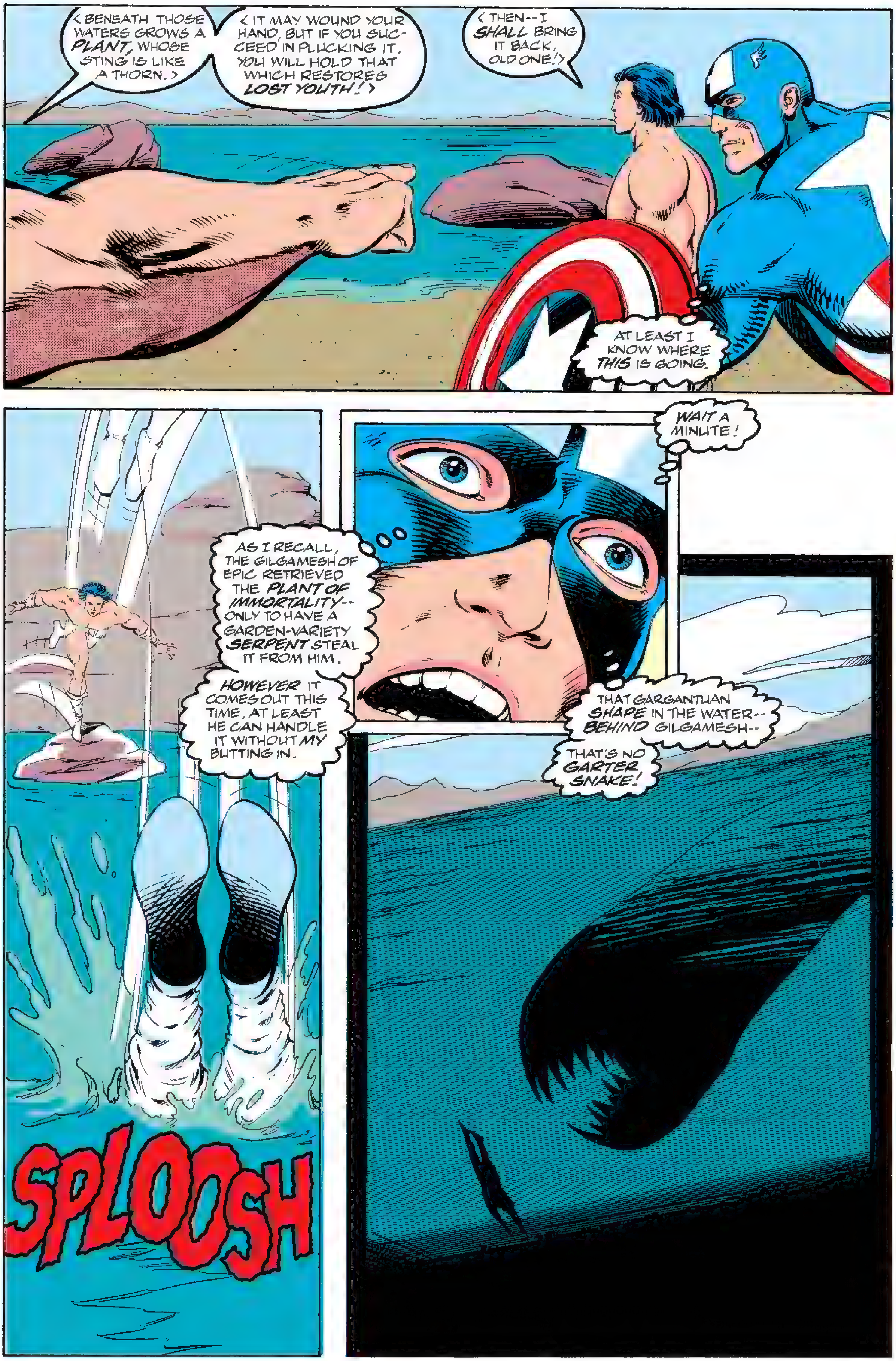

<YOU ARE A BRAVE AND MIGHTY WARRIOR, LITTLE MAN.>
< KING GILGAMESH OF URUK THANKS YOU! >
UNHHH--!
SLAP
I KNOW YOU WERE A LOT OF LEGENDARY FIGURES IN YOUR DAY, ETERNAL.
YOU SURE ONE OF THEM WASN'T HERCULES?
<WHAT?>
< ARE YOU COME FROM THE GODS, PERHAPS, TO REPLACE MY POOR, DEAD FRIEND ENKIDU? >
"ENKIDU"-- I RECOGNIZE THAT NAME!
HEAVEN HELP ME-- I DON'T THINK GILGAMESH IS IN MY ERA--
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK I'M IN HIS!
"OF COURSE! NEARLY 5000 YEARS AGO, THE HERO OF THE 'GILGAMESH EPIC' WAS KING OF URUK, IN MESOPOTAMIA!
"HE MET--AND FOUGHT--A BEAST-MAN CALLED ENKIDU--AFTER WHICH THE TWO OF THEM BECAME FAST FRIENDS!
"TOGETHER, THEY KILLED EVIL GIANTS, HUGE BULLS, AND THE LIKE.
"THEN, ONE DAY, ENKIDU DIED--AND GILGAMESH REALIZED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT HE WASN'T IMMORTAL.
"THE ONLY THING IS--THIS GILGAMESH IS IMMORTAL!

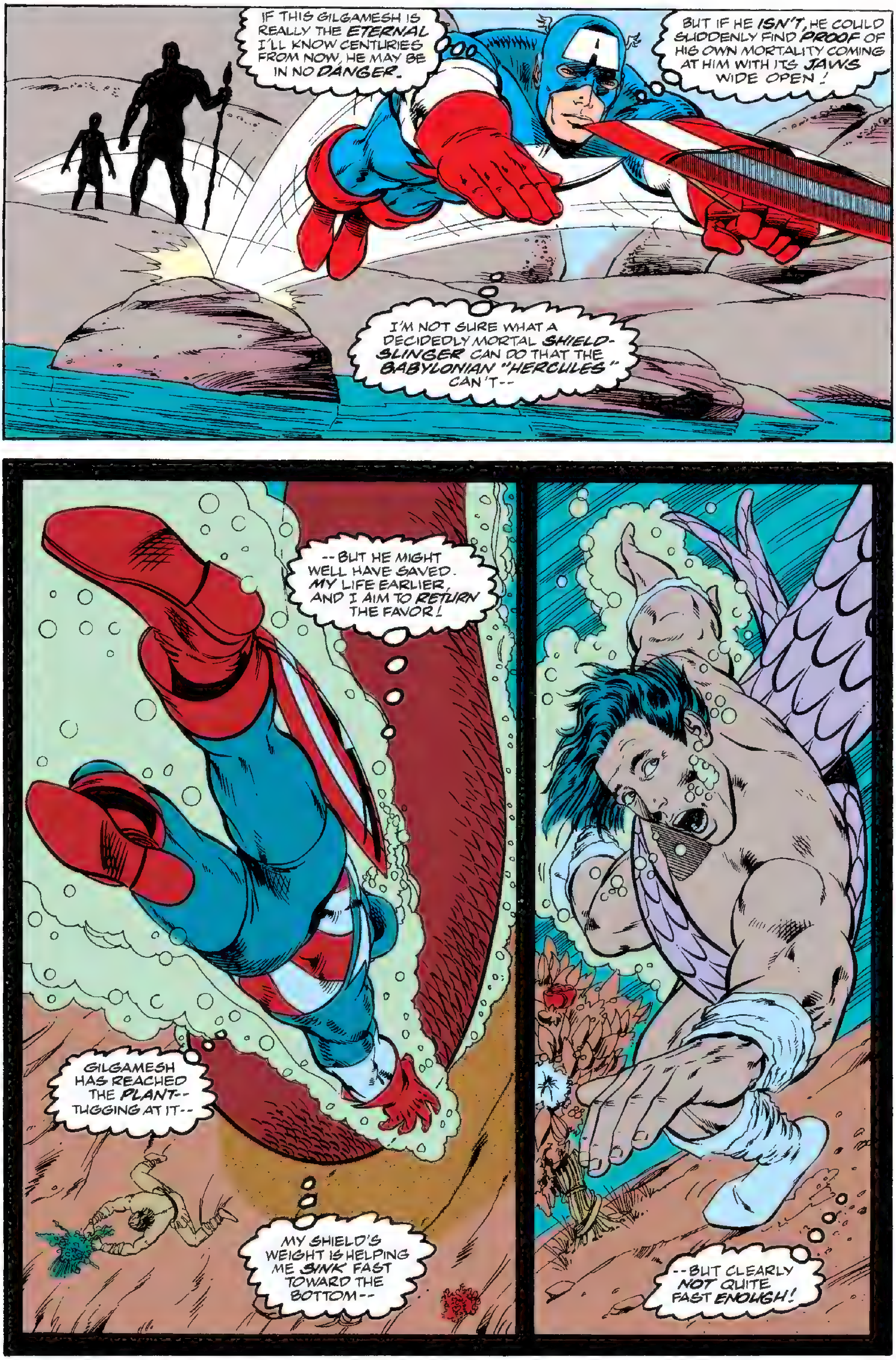

ONLY-- I WONDER IF HE KNOWS HE'S AN ETERNAL, HERE IN WHAT MAY BE THE 3RD MILLENNIUM B.C.
I'M STARTING TO THINK NOT.
I'M GOING TO TRY A NAME ON YOU, GILGAMESH...
UTNAPISHTIM!
<YES! UTNAPISHTIM! YOU KNOW OF HIM? HE IS THE MAN I SEEK-->
<--AND HE DWELLS BEYOND THE RIVER OF DEATH!>
HE MUST LIVE OVER YONDER. BUT THE RIVER DOESN'T LOOK THAT WIDE OR DEEP. WE COULD--
<STOP!>
THAT BOULDER'S-- DISSOLVING!
SSSSS
WELL, I COULDN'T BE EXPECTED TO REMEMBER EVERY DETAIL OF THE GILGAMESH EPIC, CAN I?
HERE COMES UTNAPISHTIM'S BOATMAN.
NOT A CHARON TYPE, ANYWAY, BUT I FORGET HIS--
<THIS IS URSHANABI.>
RIGHT. WELL, HAVE A NICE TRIP. I'VE GOT TO BE--
HOLY HANNAH! NOW THAT THE FOG'S LIFTED ON THE FAR SIDE--
--I CAN SEE SOME WEIRD FUTURISTIC TOWERS IN THE DISTANCE.
HOPE THAT BOAT HOLDS THREE, FELLAS--
--'CAUSE CAPTAIN AMERICA JUST GOT A YEN TO GO EXPLORING!

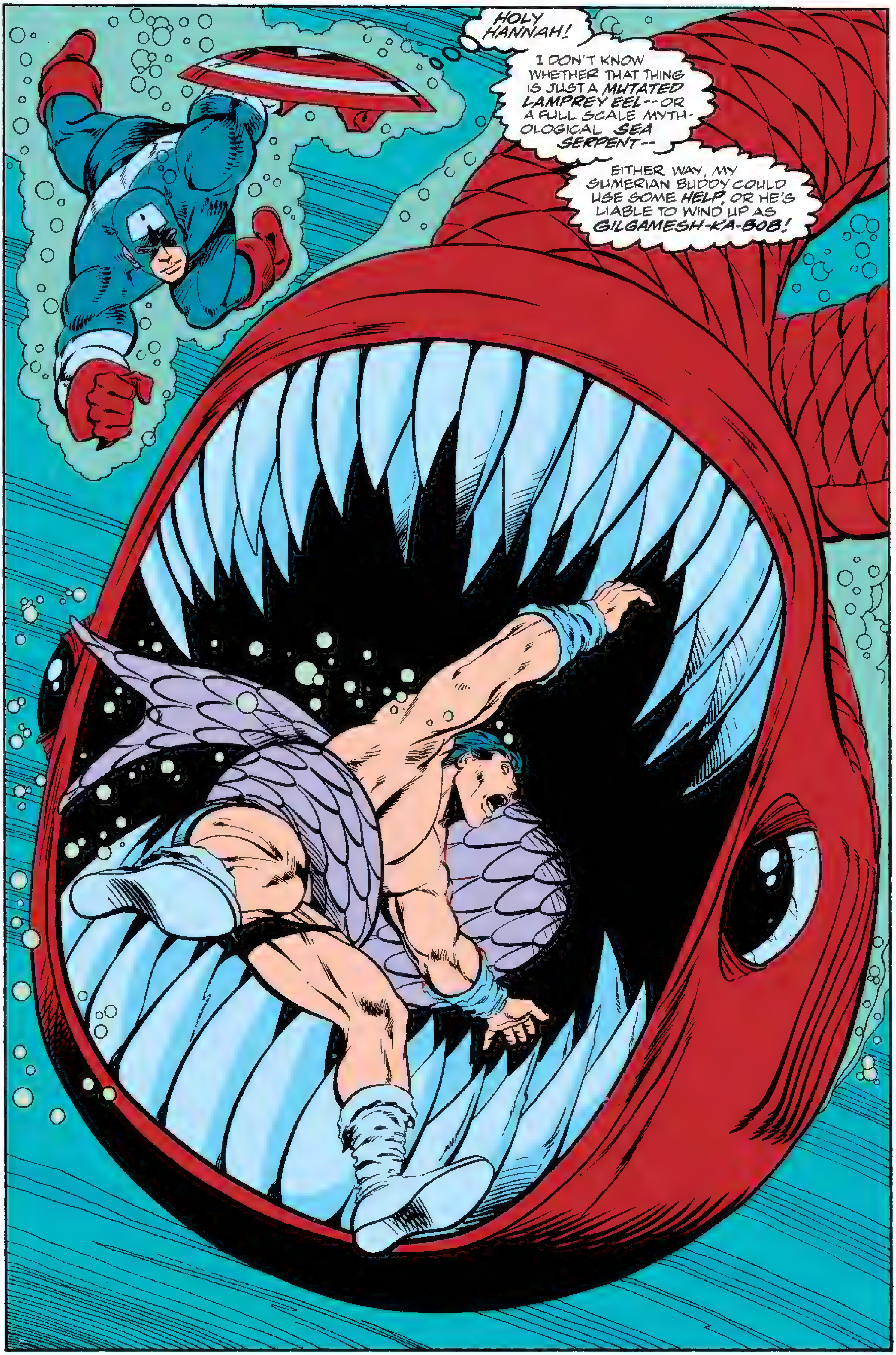

MEANWHILE--OR IS IT NEARLY FIVE THOUSAND YEARS LATER?--IN THE SUBURBS OF BOSTON, DR. ANTHONY DRUID IS ENJOYING A BIT OF LEVITATIONAL MEDITATION, WHEN--
THERE'S SOMEONE IN THIS ROOM--SOMEONE THAT WASN'T HERE A MOMENT AGO!
WHOEVER YOU ARE--SHOW YOURSELF, OR--
YOU NEEDN'T MAKE THREATS, MY HEROIC ONE.
NEBULA?! I FIGURED YOU WERE STILL ALIVE SOMEWHERE.
BUT YOU'VE GOT A NERVE SHOWING UP HERE--AFTER YOU TRIED TO TURN THE WHOLE WORLD'S CLOCK BACK TO 1961!*
* SEE AVENGERS SPOTLIGHT #37.--RALF
I WAS CRAZED, MY LOVE, BY THE EERIE POWERS I ACQUIRED AT THE HEART OF THE TIME STORM.
PLEASE--YOU MUST FORGIVE ME--YOU MUST BELIEVE ME--
--AND, ABOVE ALL, YOU MUST HELP ME!
YOU MUST HAVE ME CONFUSED WITH SOMEONE WHO'S STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU, NEBULA.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'LL GET BACK TO MY MEDITATION...
WHETHER HE DOES, OR WHETHER HE DOESN'T--

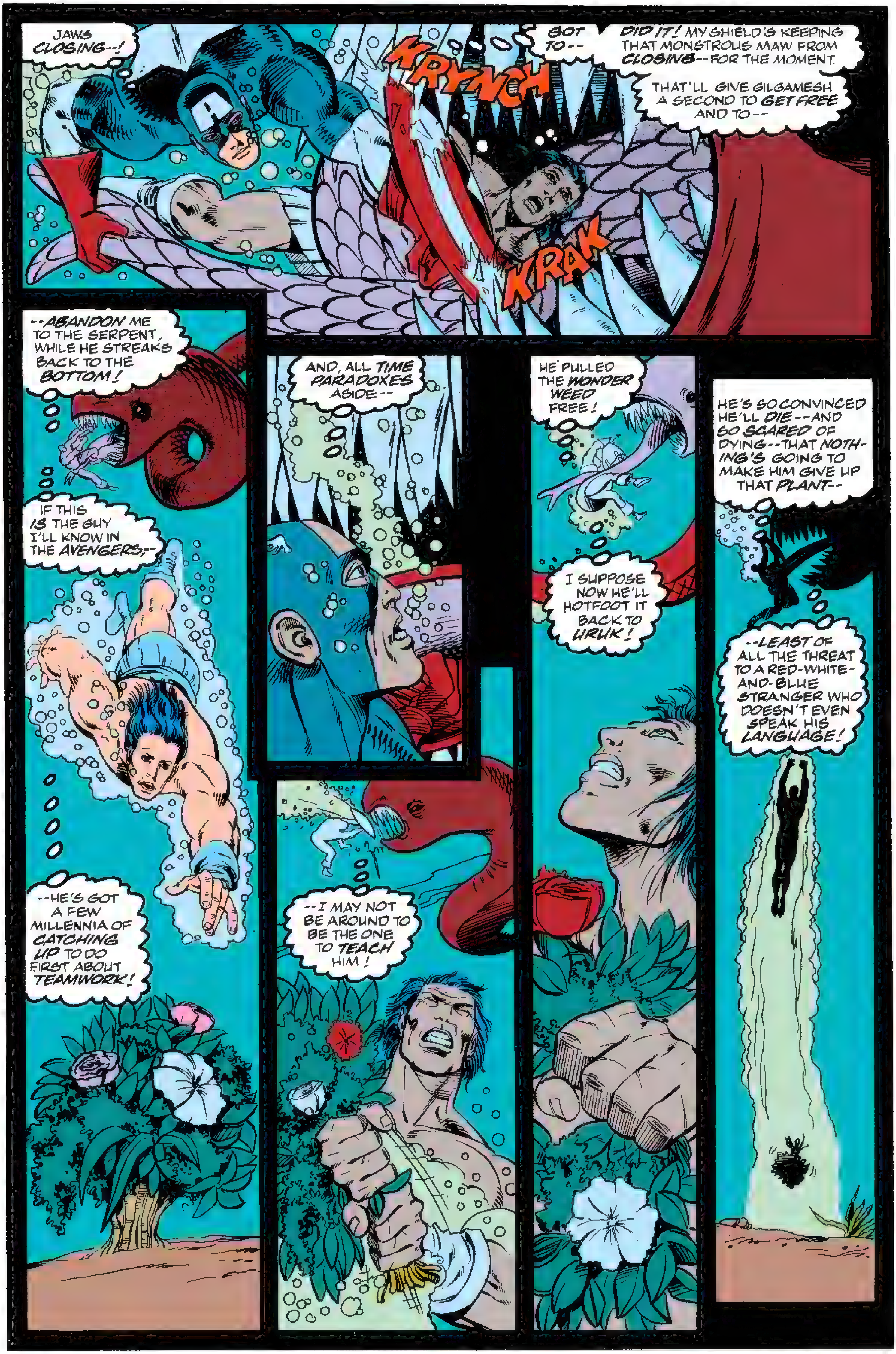

--WE WON'T FIND THE ANSWER IN 2700 B.C.
I JUST REALIZED--THOSE ALIENS MUST'VE BEEN THE MYSTERIOUS "THINGS OF STONE" GILGAMESH SMASHES IN ONE BADLY PRESERVED PART OF HIS EPIC.
I'VE LUCKED INTO SOLVING ONE OF THE GREAT MYSTERIES OF MESOPOTAMIAN SCHOLARSHIP--AND I CAN'T EVEN READ CUNEIFORM!
I CAN'T FORGET MY OWN MISSION--TO FIND THE VISION--
--BUT GILGAMESH IS SO DEPRESSED, I CAN'T ABANDON HIM RIGHT NOW.
KNOWLEDGE OF HIS OWN MORTALITY HAS HIT HIM LIKE A SPEEDING FREIGHT TRAIN.
AND THAT'S WHERE UTNAPISHTIM COMES IN!
UTNAPISHTIM'S THE EARLY MESOPOTAMIAN EQUIVALENT OF NOAH--
--ONLY HE WAS GRANTED IMMORTALITY AFTER A GREAT FLOOD DEVASTATED THE WORLD.
GILGAMESH IS DETERMINED TO LEARN HIS SECRET OF ETERNAL LIFE.
BUT WHAT'S UTNAPISHTIM GOT TO DO WITH A CITY THAT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS BUILT BY THE INHUMANS, OR MAYBE KANG THE CONQUEROR?
HERE HE COMES NOW--WITH THAT YOUNG GIRL.
MAYBE HE CAN CLUE GILGAMESH IN THAT HE'S AN ETERNAL, AND SAVE HIM A WHOLE LOT OF WORRYING.
<HAIL! I AM GILGAMESH, KING OF URUK.>
<AND I AM UTNAPISHTIM.
BUT THEN, YOU ALREADY KNEW THAT--FOR MEN DO NOT FRIVOLOUSLY CROSS THE RIVER OF DEATH.>

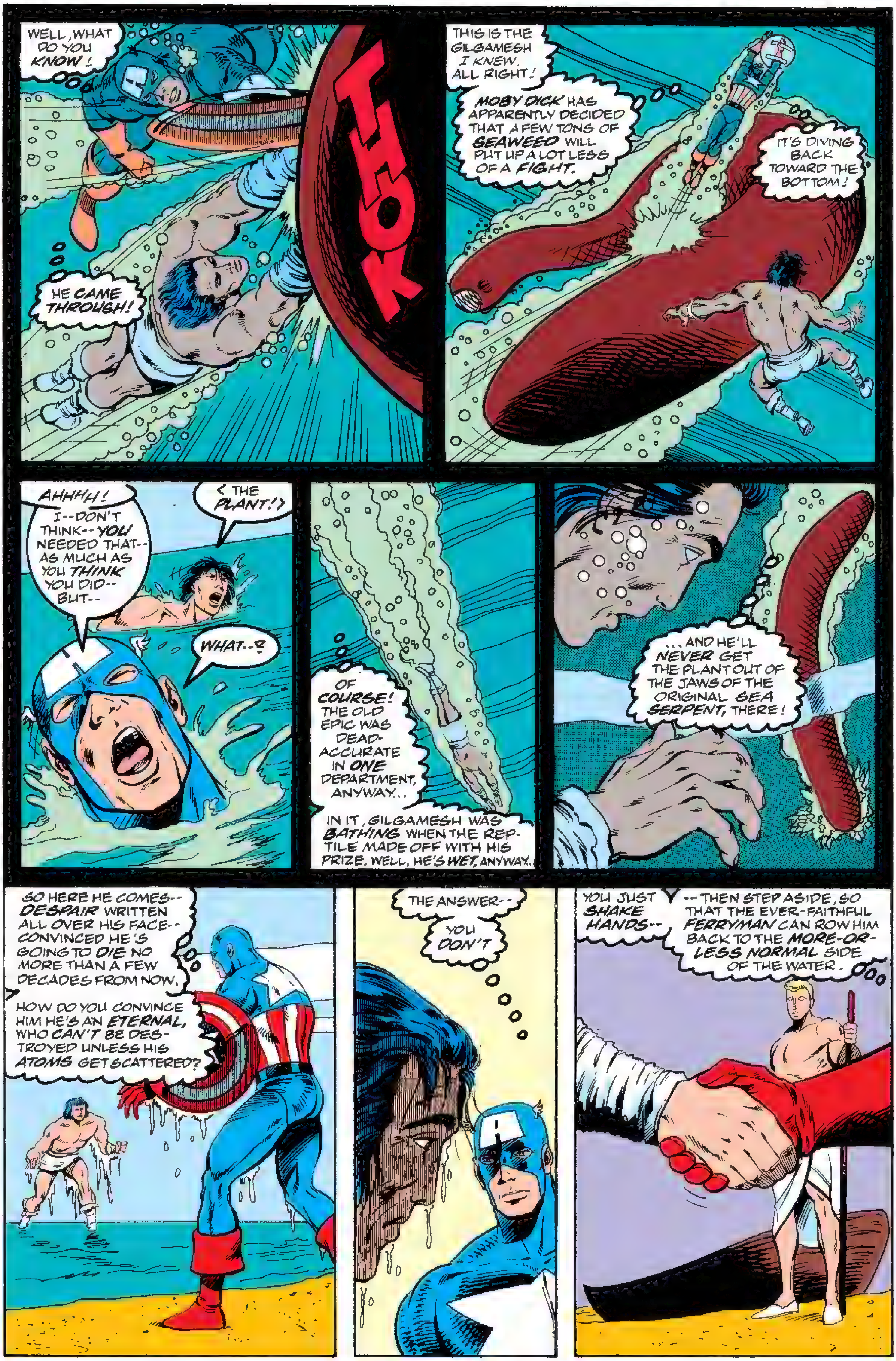

YOU HAVE COME BRINGING A *NEW* FRIEND--HOPING HE WILL RELIEVE YOU OF THE PAIN OF LOSING THE *OLD* ONE.
BUT YOU CANNOT MAKE *BARGAINS* WITH MEMORY, WARRIOR-KING--
--WHETHER YOU HAVE LOST *ONE* FRIEND--OR A *WORLD* OF FRIENDS, AS I ONCE DID!
I'M BETTING HE'S WORKING UP TO REMINISCING ABOUT THE *FLOOD*--
"--THE ONE THAT HAPPENED WHEN THE CELESTIALS PUNISHED THE REBELLIOUS *DEVIANTS* BY SINKING LEMURIA AND ITS SISTER CONTINENTS!
"DOESN'T GILGAMESH *REMEMBER*? HE'S THE ONE WHO *TOLD* ME ABOUT IT!
"UTNAPISHTIM, HIS FAMILY, AND SOME WILDLIFE SURVIVED ON AN *ARK* HE BUILT.
"LATER, *IKARIS* OF THE ETERNALS DESCENDED FROM OLYMPIA, AND LED THEM TO A MOUNTAIN TOP.
"THE GILGAMESH WHO *RELATED* THE TALE THOUGHT IT A *HOWL* THAT THE HUMANS MISTAKE IKARIS FOR A *BIRD*..."
...AND IF HE DOESN'T RECALL THAT *NOW*, THEN EITHER THAT *ISN'T* THE REAL GILGAMESH--
--OR, MORE LIKELY, HE'S GOT *SOME* KIND OF *AMNESIA* THAT MADE HIM FORGET HE WAS BORN AN *ETERNAL*!
HE SAID HE'D HAD NAMES *BEFORE* GILGAMESH, AS WELL AS *AFTER*.
WHAT *WERE* THEY, I WONDER? HOW FAR BACK INTO THE *DAWN* OF HUMAN ANTIQUITY...?
<*PLEASE*, GREAT ONE--I *MUST* KNOW THE SECRET OF *IMMORTALITY*!>
<AND, FOR MY OWN REASONS, I SHALL *SHARE* MINE WITH YOU...>

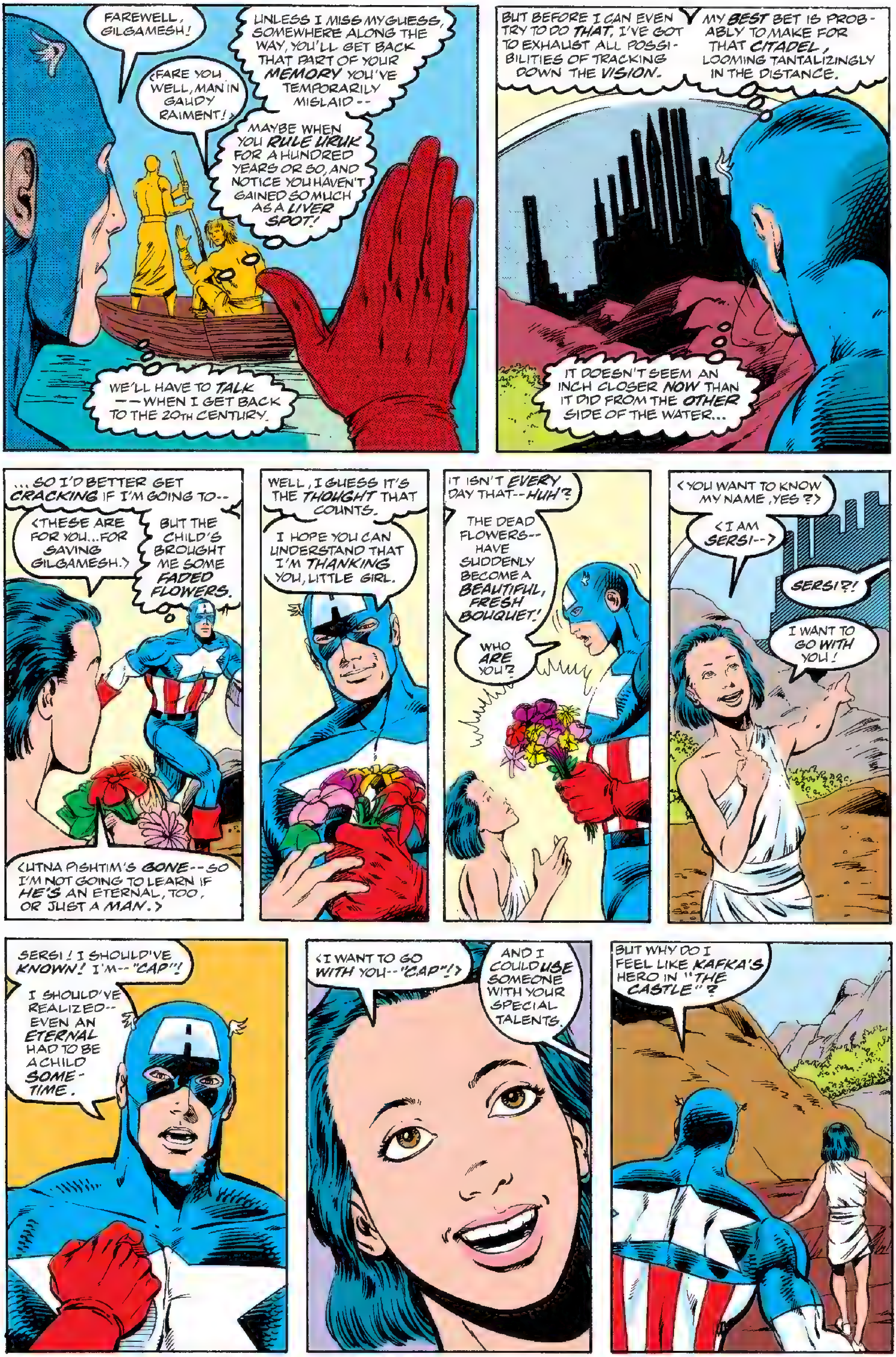

< BENEATH THOSE WATERS GROWS A PLANT, WHOSE STING IS LIKE A THORN. >
< IT MAY WOUND YOUR HAND, BUT IF YOU SUCCEED IN PLUCKING IT, YOU WILL HOLD THAT WHICH RESTORES LOST YOUTH! >
< THEN-- I SHALL BRING IT BACK, OLD ONE! >
AT LEAST I KNOW WHERE THIS IS GOING.
AS I RECALL, THE GILGAMESH OF EPIC RETRIEVED THE PLANT OF IMMORTALITY-- ONLY TO HAVE A GARDEN-VARIETY SERPENT STEAL IT FROM HIM.
HOWEVER IT COMES OUT THIS TIME, AT LEAST HE CAN HANDLE IT WITHOUT MY BUTTING IN.
SPLOOSH
WAIT A MINUTE!
THAT GARGANTUAN SHAPE IN THE WATER-- BEHIND GILGAMESH--
THAT'S NO GARTER SNAKE!

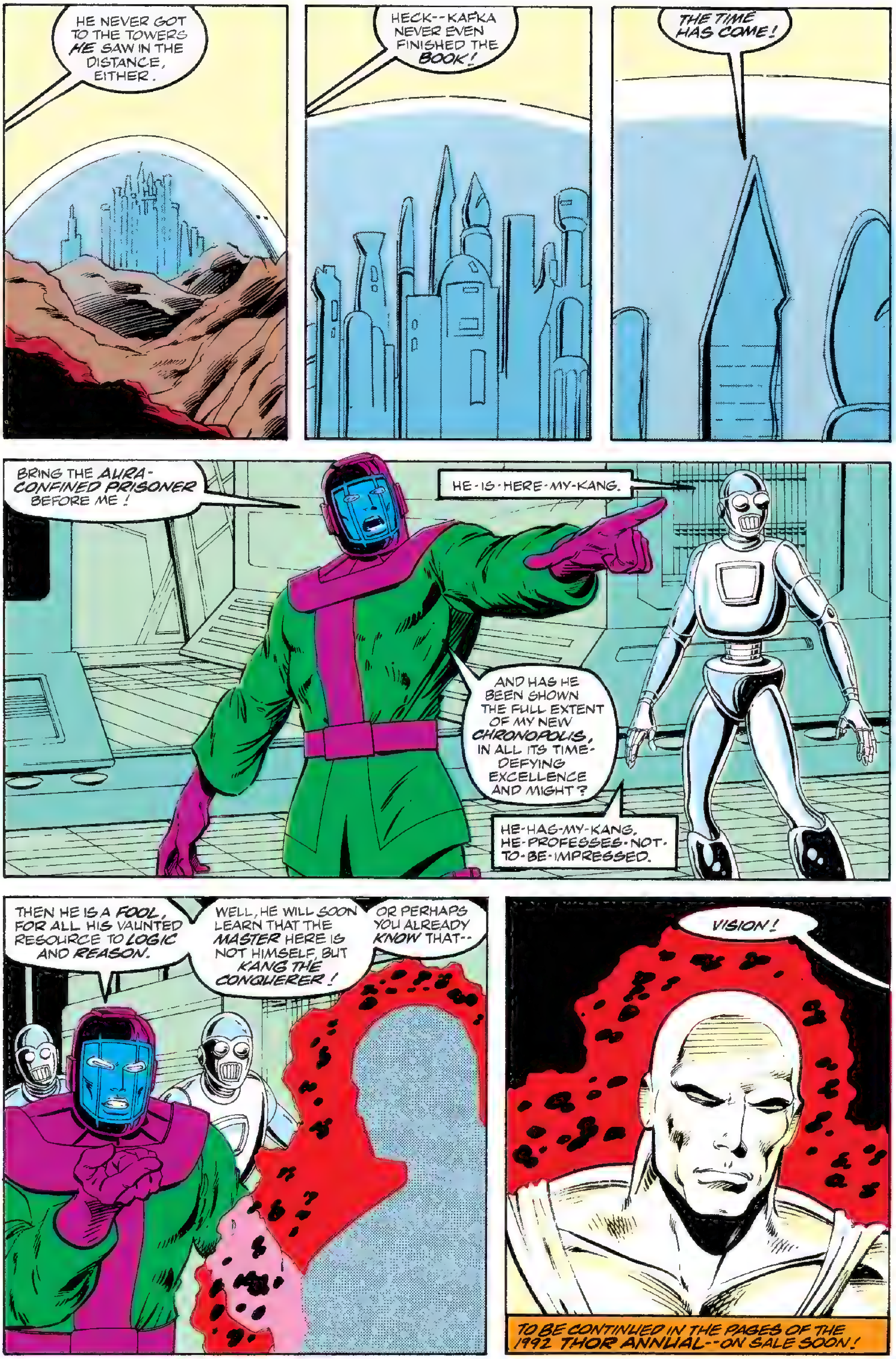

IF THIS GILGAMESH IS REALLY THE *ETERNAL* I'LL KNOW CENTURIES FROM NOW, HE MAY BE IN NO *DANGER*.
BUT IF HE *ISN'T*, HE COULD SUDDENLY FIND *PROOF* OF HIS OWN MORTALITY COMING AT HIM WITH ITS *JAWS* WIDE OPEN!
I'M NOT SURE WHAT A DECIDEDLY MORTAL *SHIELD-SLINGER* CAN DO THAT THE *BABYLONIAN "HERCULES"* CAN'T--
--BUT HE MIGHT WELL HAVE SAVED *MY* LIFE EARLIER, AND I AIM TO *RETURN* THE FAVOR!
GILGAMESH HAS REACHED THE *PLANT*-- TUGGING AT IT--
MY SHIELD'S WEIGHT IS HELPING ME *SINK* FAST TOWARD THE BOTTOM--
--BUT CLEARLY *NOT* QUITE FAST *ENOUGH*!

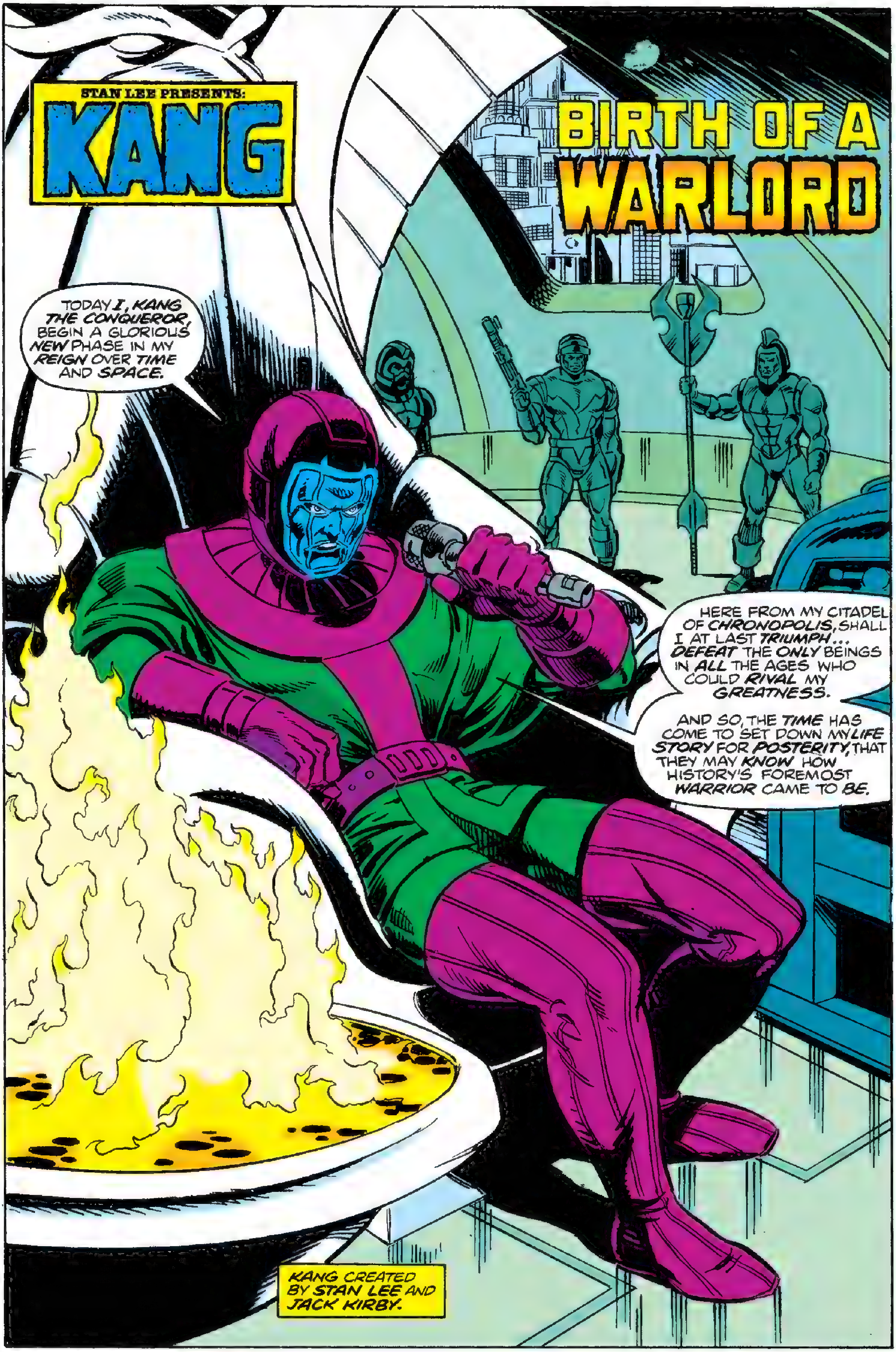

HOLY HANNAH!
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THAT THING IS JUST A MUTATED LAMPREY EEL--OR A FULL SCALE MYTHOLOGICAL SEA SERPENT--
EITHER WAY, MY SUMERIAN BUDDY COULD USE SOME HELP, OR HE'S LIABLE TO WIND UP AS GILGAMESH-KA-BOB!

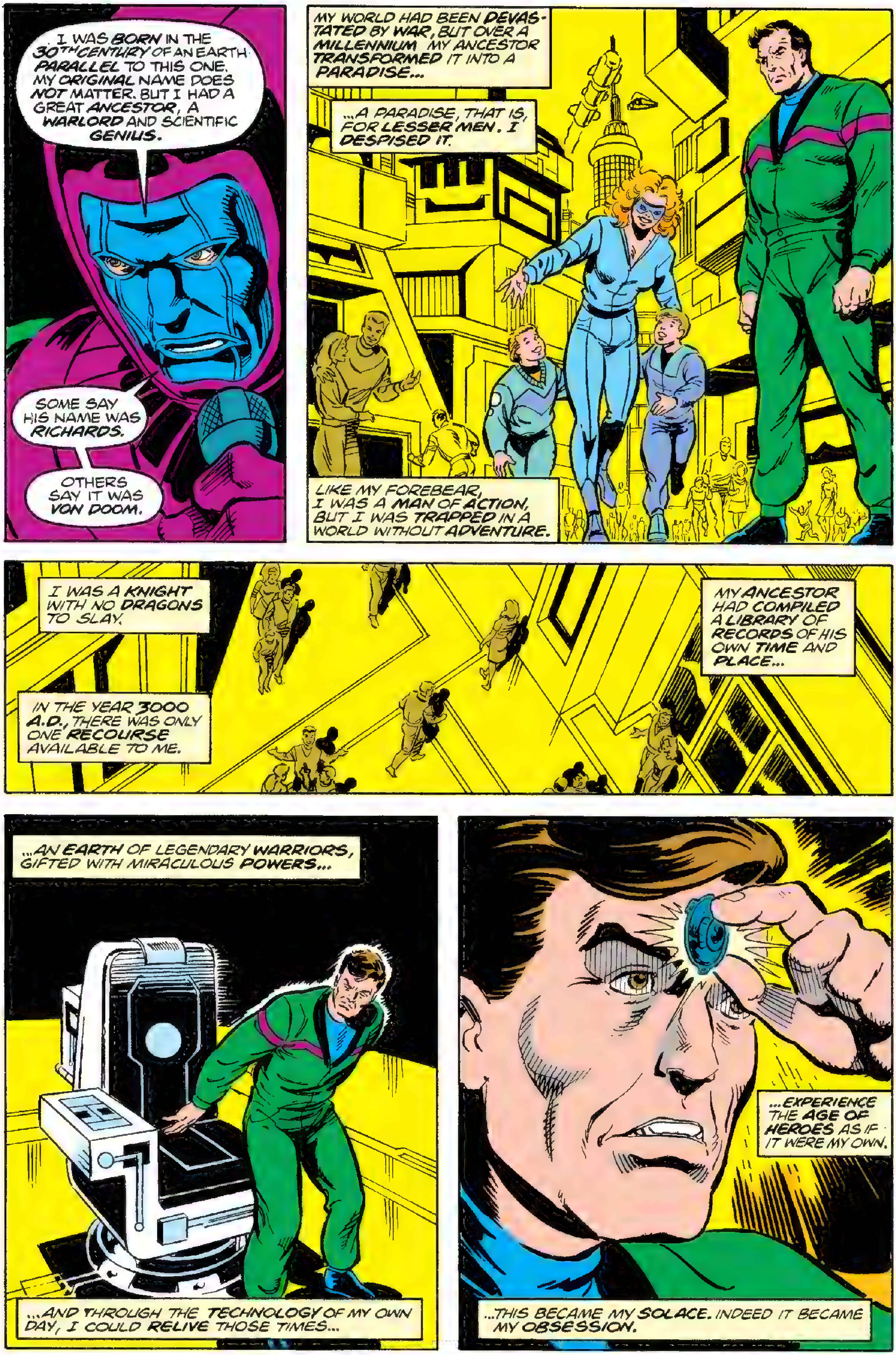

JAWS CLOSING--!
KRYNCH
GOT TO--
DID IT! MY SHIELD'S KEEPING THAT MONSTROUS MAW FROM CLOSING--FOR THE MOMENT.
THAT'LL GIVE GILGAMESH A SECOND TO GET FREE AND TO--
KRAK
--ABANDON ME TO THE SERPENT, WHILE HE STREAKS BACK TO THE BOTTOM!
IF THIS IS THE GUY I'LL KNOW IN THE AVENGERS,--
--HE'S GOT A FEW MILLENNIA OF CATCHING UP TO DO FIRST ABOUT TEAMWORK!
AND, ALL TIME PARADOXES ASIDE--
--I MAY NOT BE AROUND TO BE THE ONE TO TEACH HIM!
HE PULLED THE WONDER WEED FREE!
I SUPPOSE NOW HE'LL HOTFOOT IT BACK TO URUK!
HE'S SO CONVINCED HE'LL DIE--AND SO SCARED OF DYING--THAT NOTHING'S GOING TO MAKE HIM GIVE UP THAT PLANT--
--LEAST OF ALL THE THREAT TO A RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE STRANGER WHO DOESN'T EVEN SPEAK HIS LANGUAGE!

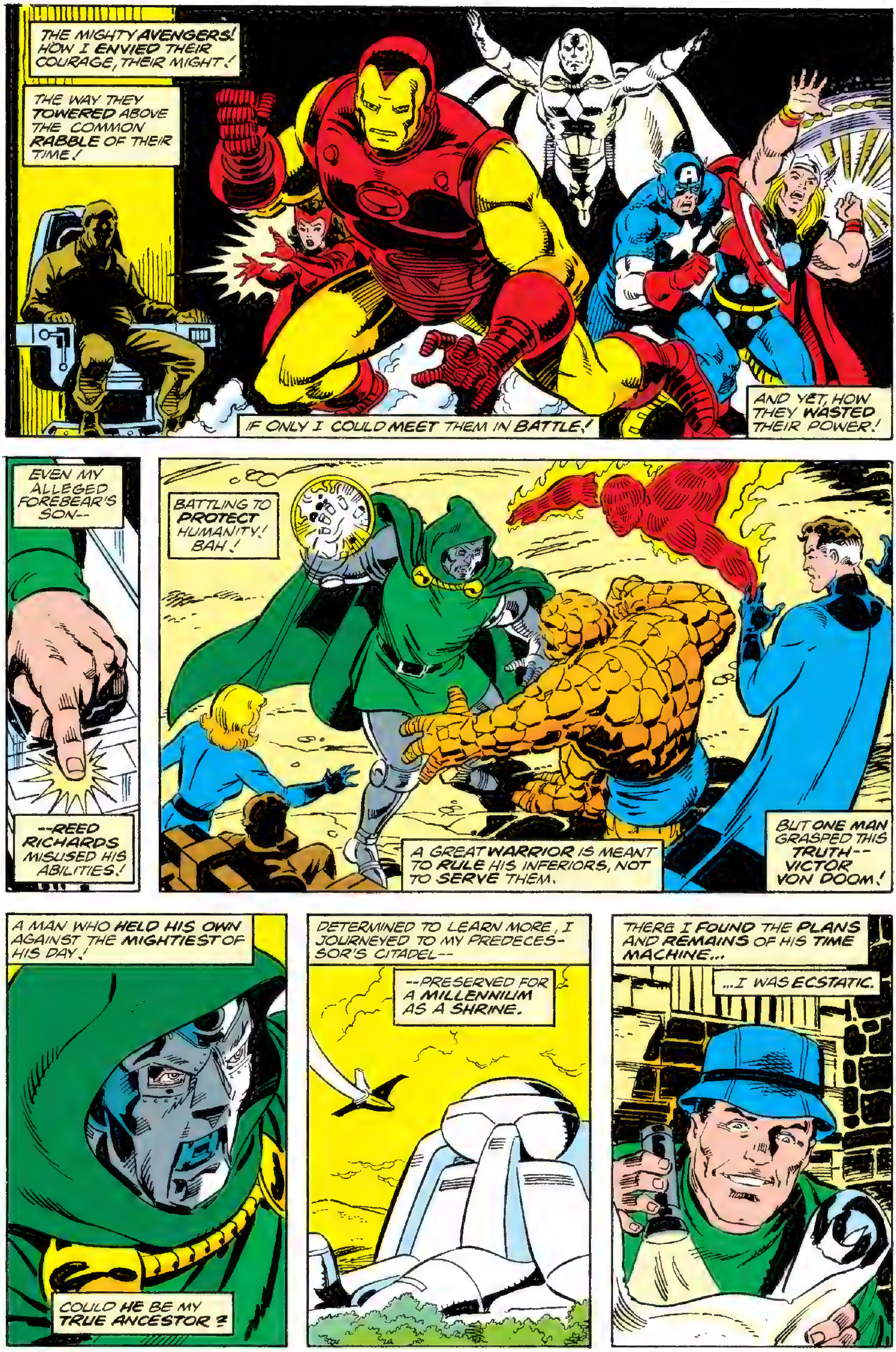

WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW!
THOK
HE CAME THROUGH!
THIS IS THE GILGAMESH I KNEW, ALL RIGHT!
MOBY DICK HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT A FEW TONS OF SEAWEED WILL PUT UP A LOT LESS OF A FIGHT.
IT'S DIVING BACK TOWARD THE BOTTOM!
AHHHH! I--DON'T THINK--YOU NEEDED THAT--AS MUCH AS YOU THINK YOU DID--BUT--
< THE PLANT!>
WHAT--?
OF COURSE! THE OLD EPIC WAS DEAD-ACCURATE IN ONE DEPARTMENT, ANYWAY...
IN IT, GILGAMESH WAS BATHING WHEN THE REPTILE MADE OFF WITH HIS PRIZE. WELL, HE'S WET, ANYWAY.
...AND HE'LL NEVER GET THE PLANT OUT OF THE JAWS OF THE ORIGINAL SEA SERPENT, THERE!
SO HERE HE COMES--DESPAIR WRITTEN ALL OVER HIS FACE--CONVINCED HE'S GOING TO DIE NO MORE THAN A FEW DECADES FROM NOW.
HOW DO YOU CONVINCE HIM HE'S AN ETERNAL, WHO CAN'T BE DESTROYED UNLESS HIS ATOMS GET SCATTERED?
THE ANSWER--
YOU DON'T.
YOU JUST SHAKE HANDS--
--THEN STEP ASIDE, SO THAT THE EVER-FAITHFUL FERRYMAN CAN ROW HIM BACK TO THE MORE-OR-LESS NORMAL SIDE OF THE WATER.

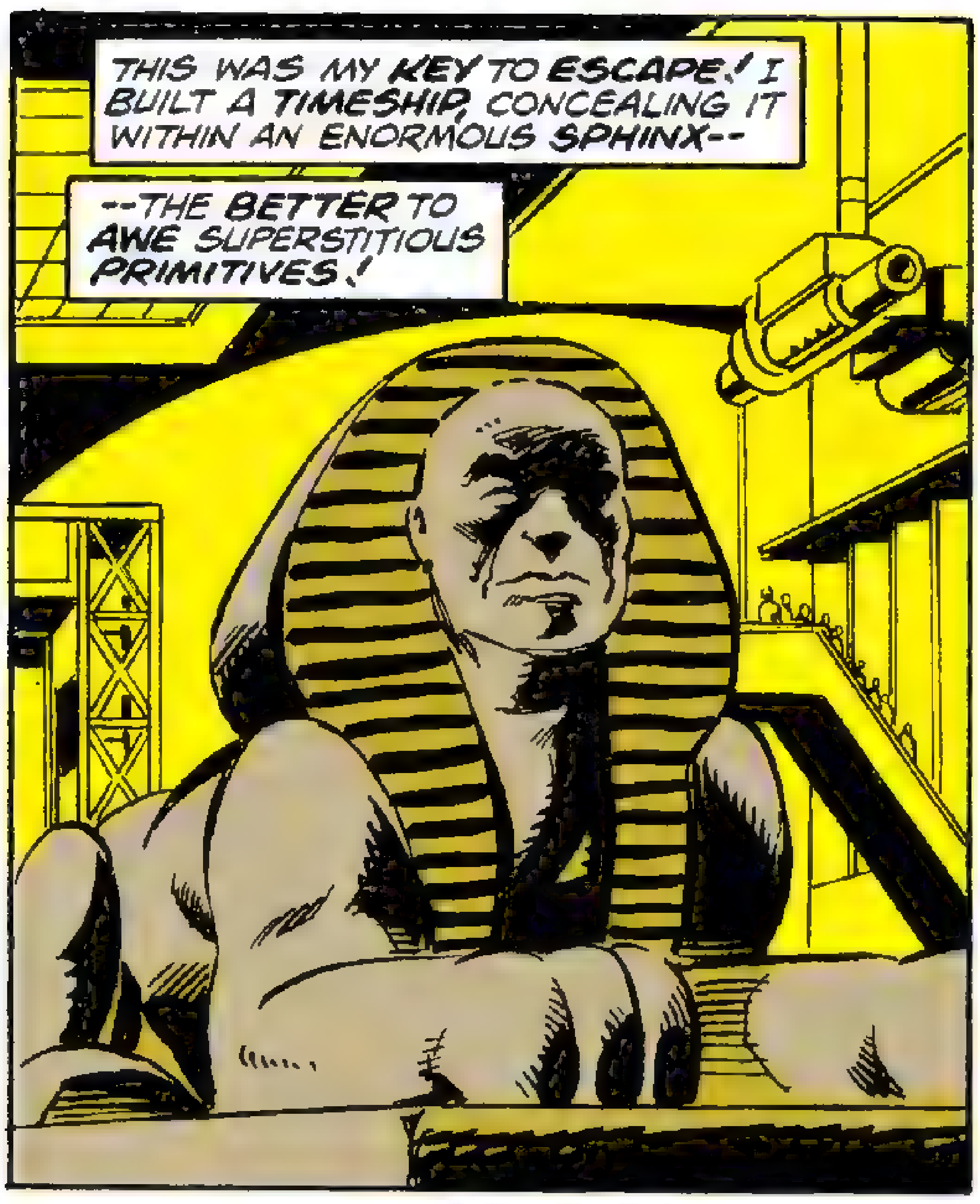

FAREWELL, GILGAMESH!
<FARE YOU WELL, MAN IN GAUDY RAIMENT!>
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, YOU'LL GET BACK THAT PART OF YOUR MEMORY YOU'VE TEMPORARILY MISLAID--
MAYBE WHEN YOU RULE URUK FOR A HUNDRED YEARS OR SO, AND NOTICE YOU HAVEN'T GAINED SO MUCH AS A LIVER SPOT!
WE'LL HAVE TO TALK -- WHEN I GET BACK TO THE 20TH CENTURY.
BUT BEFORE I CAN EVEN TRY TO DO THAT, I'VE GOT TO EXHAUST ALL POSSIBILITIES OF TRACKING DOWN THE VISION.
MY BEST BET IS PROBABLY TO MAKE FOR THAT CITADEL, LOOMING TANTALIZINGLY IN THE DISTANCE.
IT DOESN'T SEEM AN INCH CLOSER NOW THAN IT DID FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WATER...
...SO I'D BETTER GET CRACKING IF I'M GOING TO--
<THESE ARE FOR YOU...FOR SAVING GILGAMESH.>
BUT THE CHILD'S BROUGHT ME SOME FADED FLOWERS.
<UTNA PISHTIM'S GONE--SO I'M NOT GOING TO LEARN IF HE'S AN ETERNAL, TOO, OR JUST A MAN.>
WELL, I GUESS IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS.
I HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT I'M THANKING YOU, LITTLE GIRL.
IT ISN'T EVERY DAY THAT--HUH?
THE DEAD FLOWERS--HAVE SUDDENLY BECOME A BEAUTIFUL, FRESH BOUQUET!
WHO ARE YOU?
<YOU WANT TO KNOW MY NAME, YES?>
<I AM SERSI-->
SERSI?!
I WANT TO GO WITH YOU!
SERSI! I SHOULD'VE KNOWN! I'M--"CAP"!
I SHOULD'VE REALIZED--EVEN AN ETERNAL HAD TO BE A CHILD SOMETIME.
<I WANT TO GO WITH YOU--"CAP"!>
AND I COULD USE SOMEONE WITH YOUR SPECIAL TALENTS.
BUT WHY DO I FEEL LIKE KAFKA'S HERO IN "THE CASTLE"?

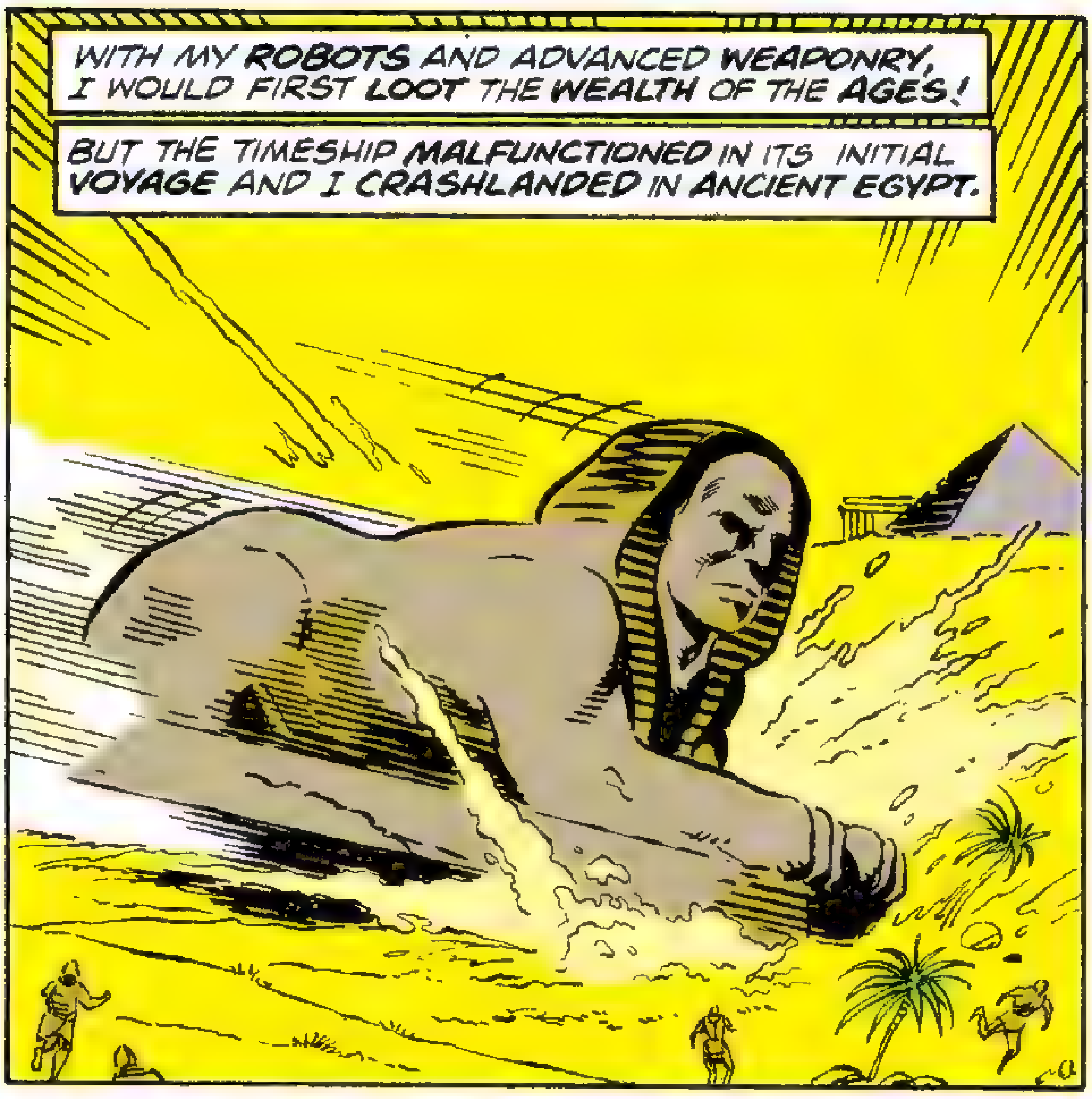

HE NEVER GOT TO THE TOWERS *HE* SAW IN THE DISTANCE, EITHER.
HECK--KAFKA NEVER EVEN FINISHED THE *BOOK!*
THE TIME HAS COME!
BRING THE *AURA-CONFINED PRISONER* BEFORE ME!
HE-IS-HERE-MY-KANG.
AND HAS HE BEEN SHOWN THE FULL EXTENT OF MY NEW *CHRONOPOLIS*, IN ALL ITS TIME-DEFYING EXCELLENCE AND MIGHT?
HE-HAS-MY-KANG. HE-PROFESSES-NOT-TO-BE-IMPRESSED.
THEN HE IS A *FOOL*, FOR ALL HIS VAUNTED RESOURCE TO *LOGIC* AND *REASON*.
WELL, HE WILL SOON LEARN THAT THE *MASTER* HERE IS NOT HIMSELF, BUT *KANG THE CONQUERER!*
OR PERHAPS YOU ALREADY *KNOW* THAT--
VISION!
TO BE CONTINUED IN THE PAGES OF THE 1992 THOR ANNUAL--ON SALE SOON!

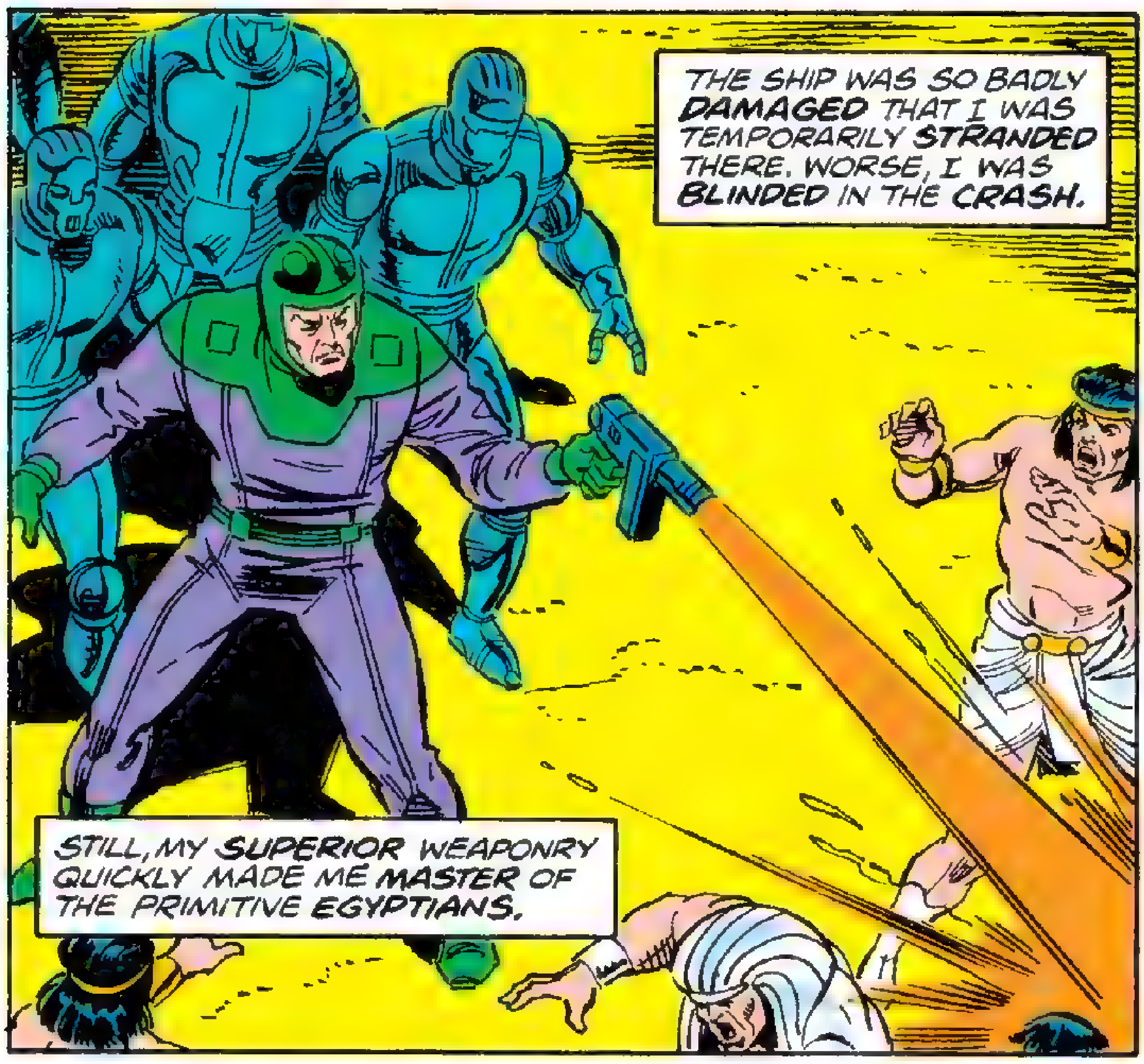

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
KANG
BIRTH OF A WARLORD
TODAY I, KANG THE CONQUEROR, BEGIN A GLORIOUS NEW PHASE IN MY REIGN OVER TIME AND SPACE.
HERE FROM MY CITADEL OF CHRONOPOLIS, SHALL I AT LAST TRIUMPH... DEFEAT THE ONLY BEINGS IN ALL THE AGES WHO COULD RIVAL MY GREATNESS.
AND SO, THE TIME HAS COME TO SET DOWN MY LIFE STORY FOR POSTERITY, THAT THEY MAY KNOW HOW HISTORY'S FOREMOST WARRIOR CAME TO BE.
KANG CREATED BY STAN LEE AND JACK KIRBY.

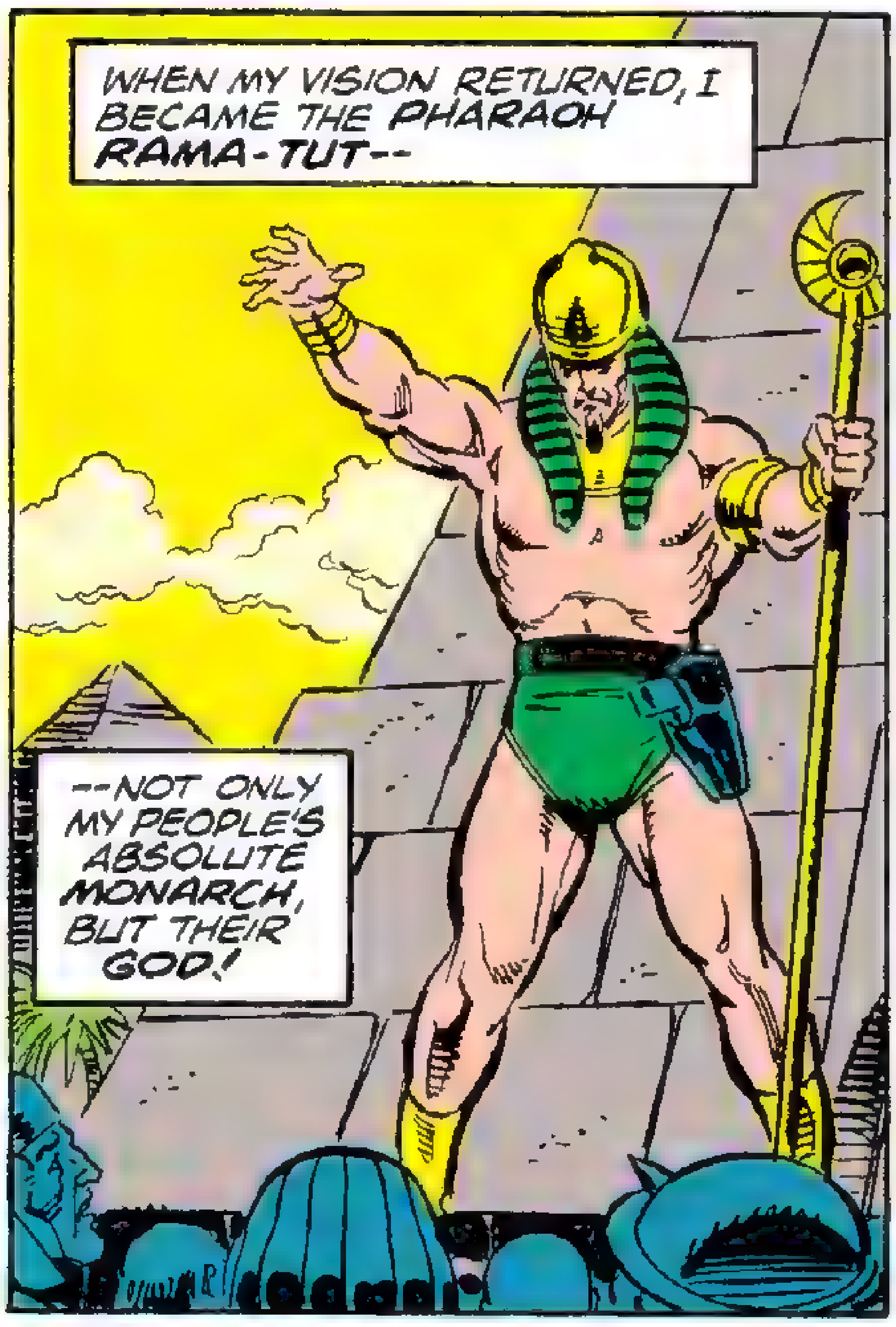

I WAS BORN IN THE 30TH CENTURY OF AN EARTH PARALLEL TO THIS ONE. MY ORIGINAL NAME DOES NOT MATTER. BUT I HAD A GREAT ANCESTOR, A WARLORD AND SCIENTIFIC GENIUS.
SOME SAY HIS NAME WAS RICHARDS.
OTHERS SAY IT WAS VON DOOM.
MY WORLD HAD BEEN DEVASTATED BY WAR, BUT OVER A MILLENNIUM MY ANCESTOR TRANSFORMED IT INTO A PARADISE...
...A PARADISE, THAT IS, FOR LESSER MEN. I DESPISED IT.
LIKE MY FOREBEAR, I WAS A MAN OF ACTION, BUT I WAS TRAPPED IN A WORLD WITHOUT ADVENTURE.
I WAS A KNIGHT WITH NO DRAGONS TO SLAY.
IN THE YEAR 3000 A.D., THERE WAS ONLY ONE RECOURSE AVAILABLE TO ME.
MY ANCESTOR HAD COMPILED A LIBRARY OF RECORDS OF HIS OWN TIME AND PLACE...
...AN EARTH OF LEGENDARY WARRIORS, GIFTED WITH MIRACULOUS POWERS...
...AND THROUGH THE TECHNOLOGY OF MY OWN DAY, I COULD RELIVE THOSE TIMES...
...EXPERIENCE THE AGE OF HEROES AS IF IT WERE MY OWN.
...THIS BECAME MY SOLACE. INDEED IT BECAME MY OBSESSION.

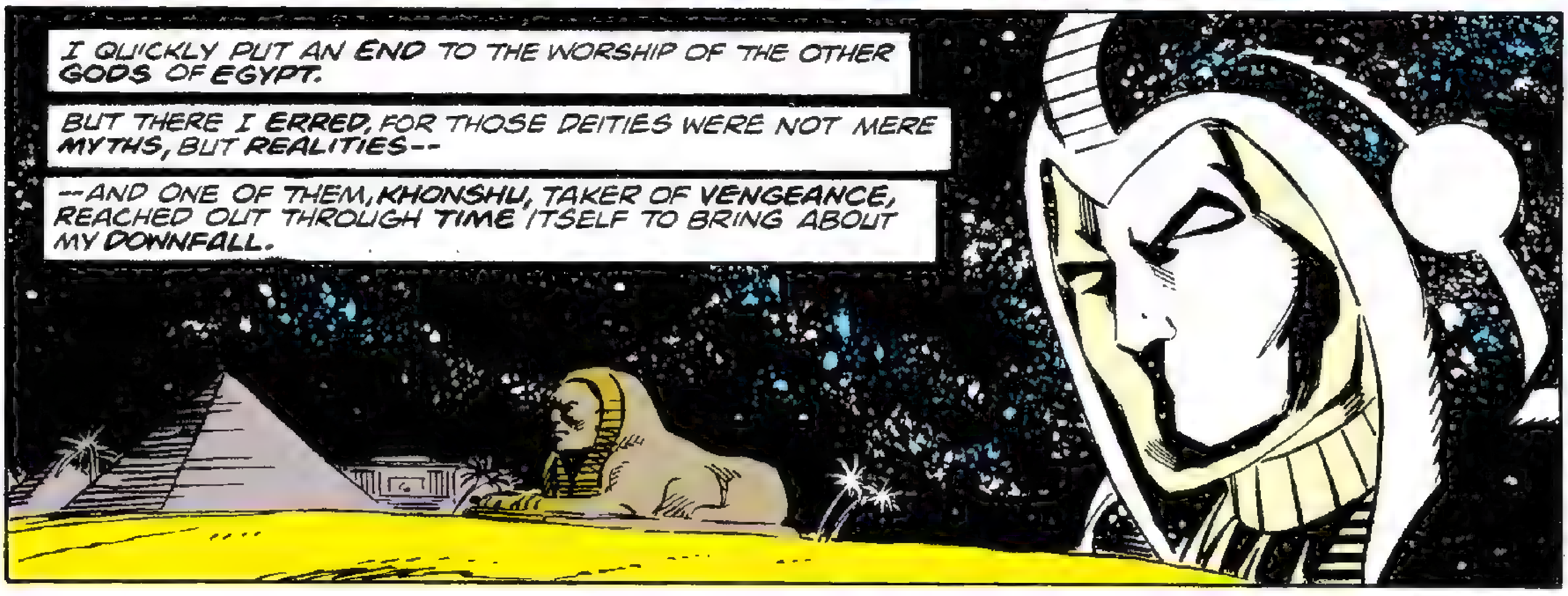

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS! HOW I ENVIED THEIR COURAGE, THEIR MIGHT!
THE WAY THEY TOWERED ABOVE THE COMMON RABBLE OF THEIR TIME!
IF ONLY I COULD MEET THEM IN BATTLE!
AND YET, HOW THEY WASTED THEIR POWER!
EVEN MY ALLEGED FOREBEAR'S SON--
--REED RICHARDS MISUSED HIS ABILITIES!
BATTLING TO PROTECT HUMANITY! BAH!
A GREAT WARRIOR IS MEANT TO RULE HIS INFERIORS, NOT TO SERVE THEM.
BUT ONE MAN GRASPED THIS TRUTH-- VICTOR VON DOOM!
A MAN WHO HELD HIS OWN AGAINST THE MIGHTIEST OF HIS DAY!
COULD HE BE MY TRUE ANCESTOR?
DETERMINED TO LEARN MORE, I JOURNEYED TO MY PREDECESSOR'S CITADEL--
--PRESERVED FOR A MILLENNIUM AS A SHRINE.
THERE I FOUND THE PLANS AND REMAINS OF HIS TIME MACHINE...
...I WAS ECSTATIC.

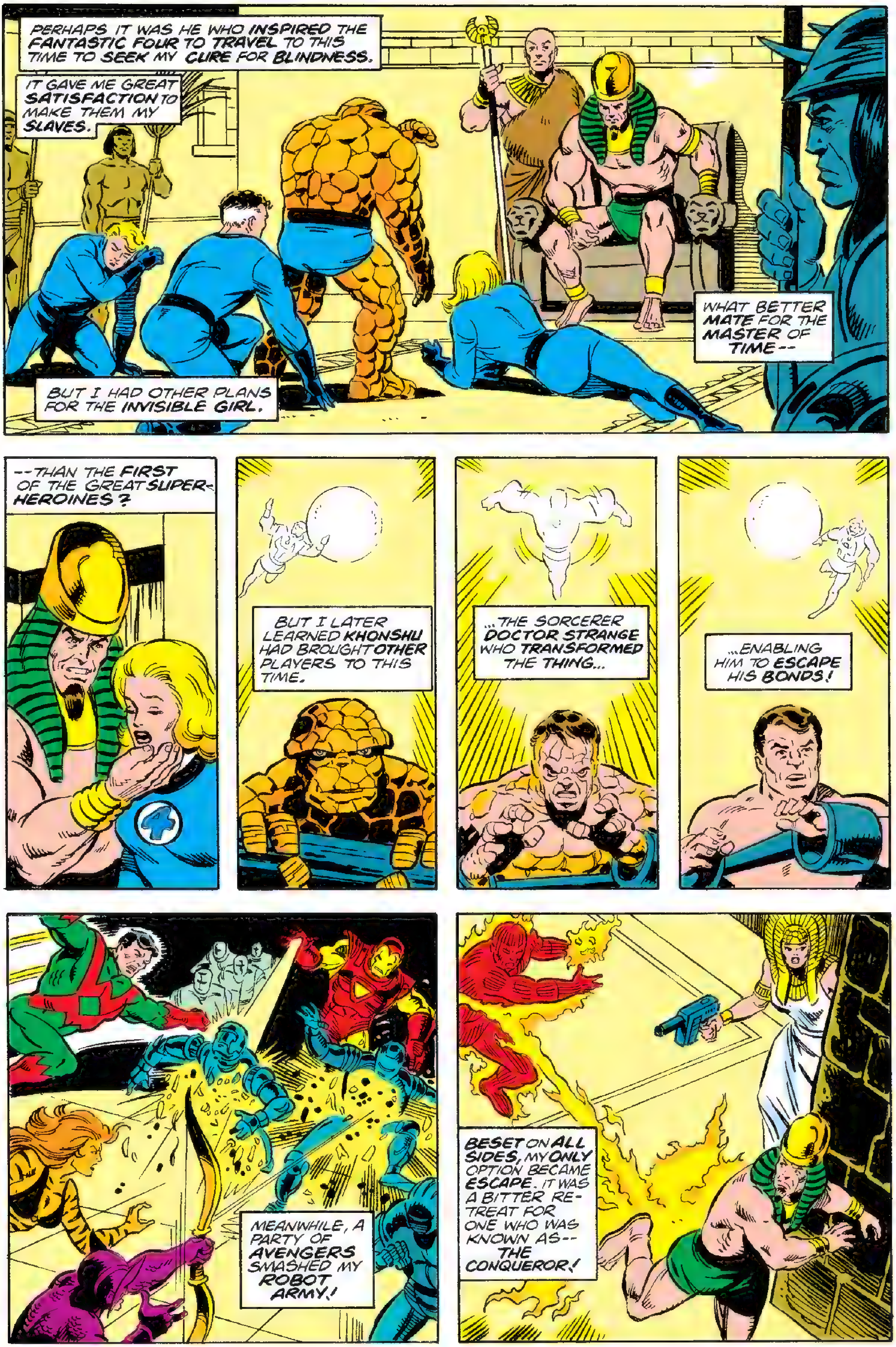

THIS WAS MY KEY TO ESCAPE! I BUILT A TIMESHIP, CONCEALING IT WITHIN AN ENORMOUS SPHINX--
--THE BETTER TO AWE SUPERSTITIOUS PRIMITIVES!

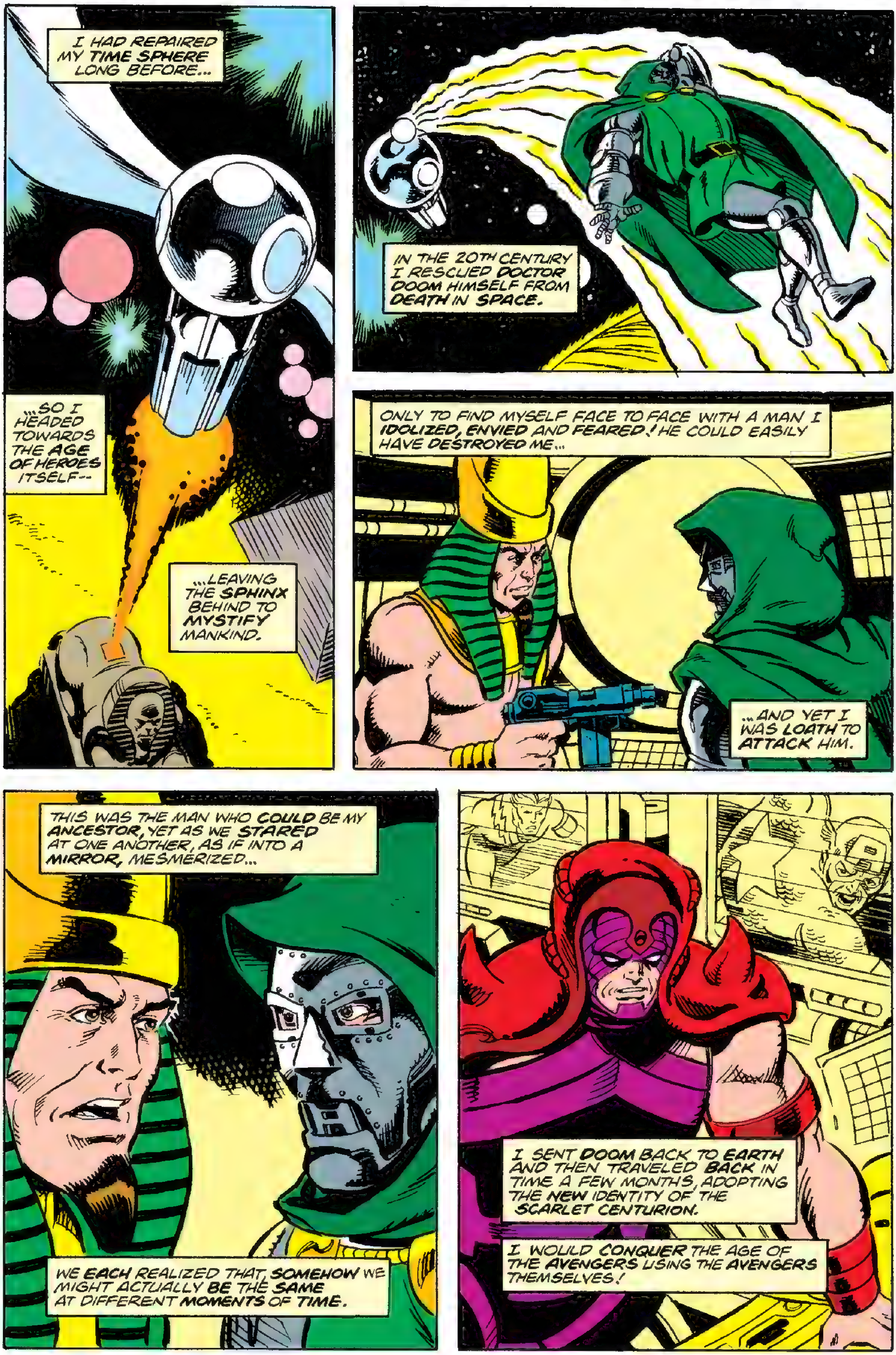

WITH MY ROBOTS AND ADVANCED WEAPONRY, I WOULD FIRST LOOT THE WEALTH OF THE AGES!
BUT THE TIMESHIP MALFUNCTIONED IN ITS INITIAL VOYAGE AND I CRASHLANDED IN ANCIENT EGYPT.

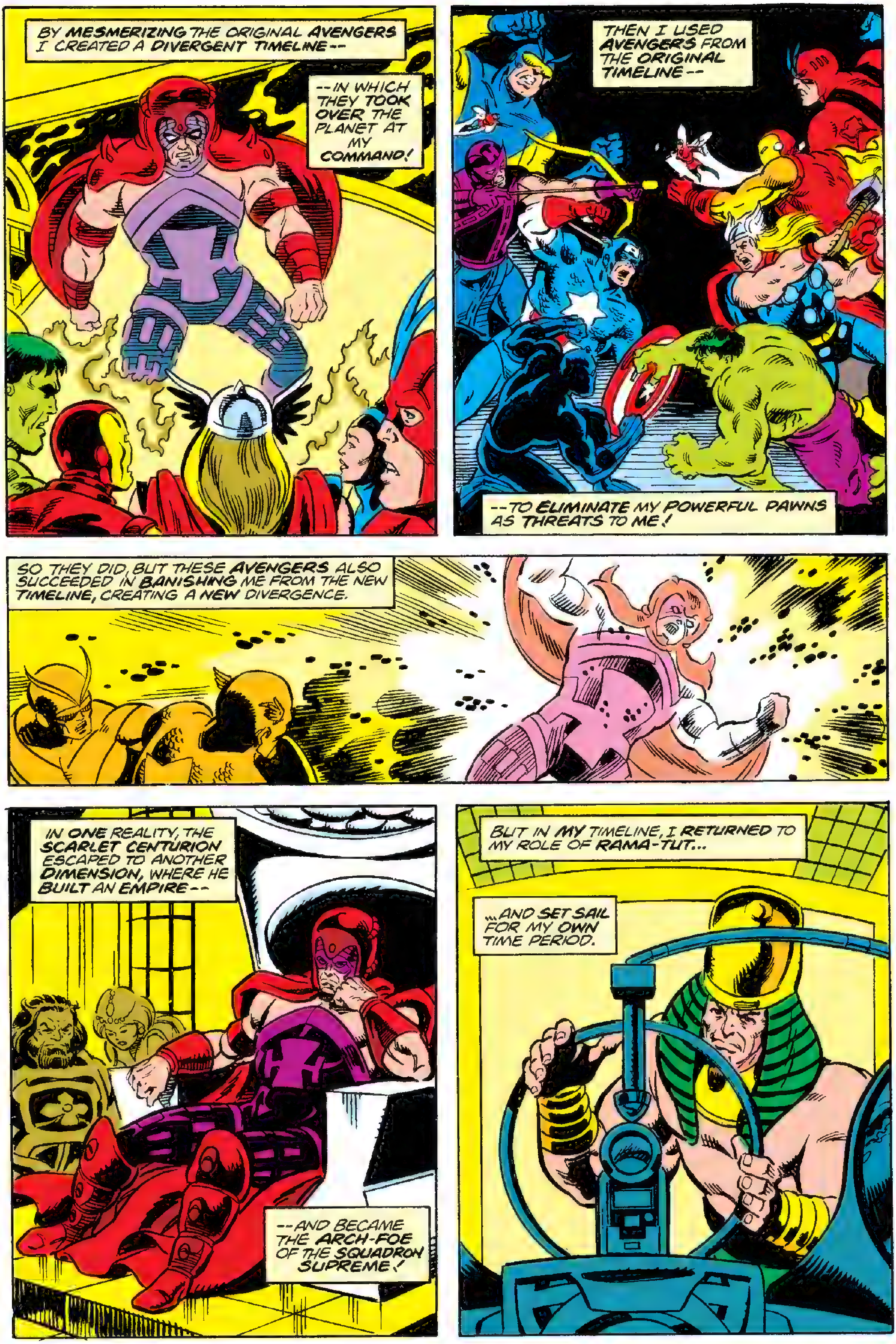

THE SHIP WAS SO BADLY DAMAGED THAT I WAS TEMPORARILY STRANDED THERE. WORSE, I WAS BLINDED IN THE CRASH.
STILL, MY SUPERIOR WEAPONRY QUICKLY MADE ME MASTER OF THE PRIMITIVE EGYPTIANS.

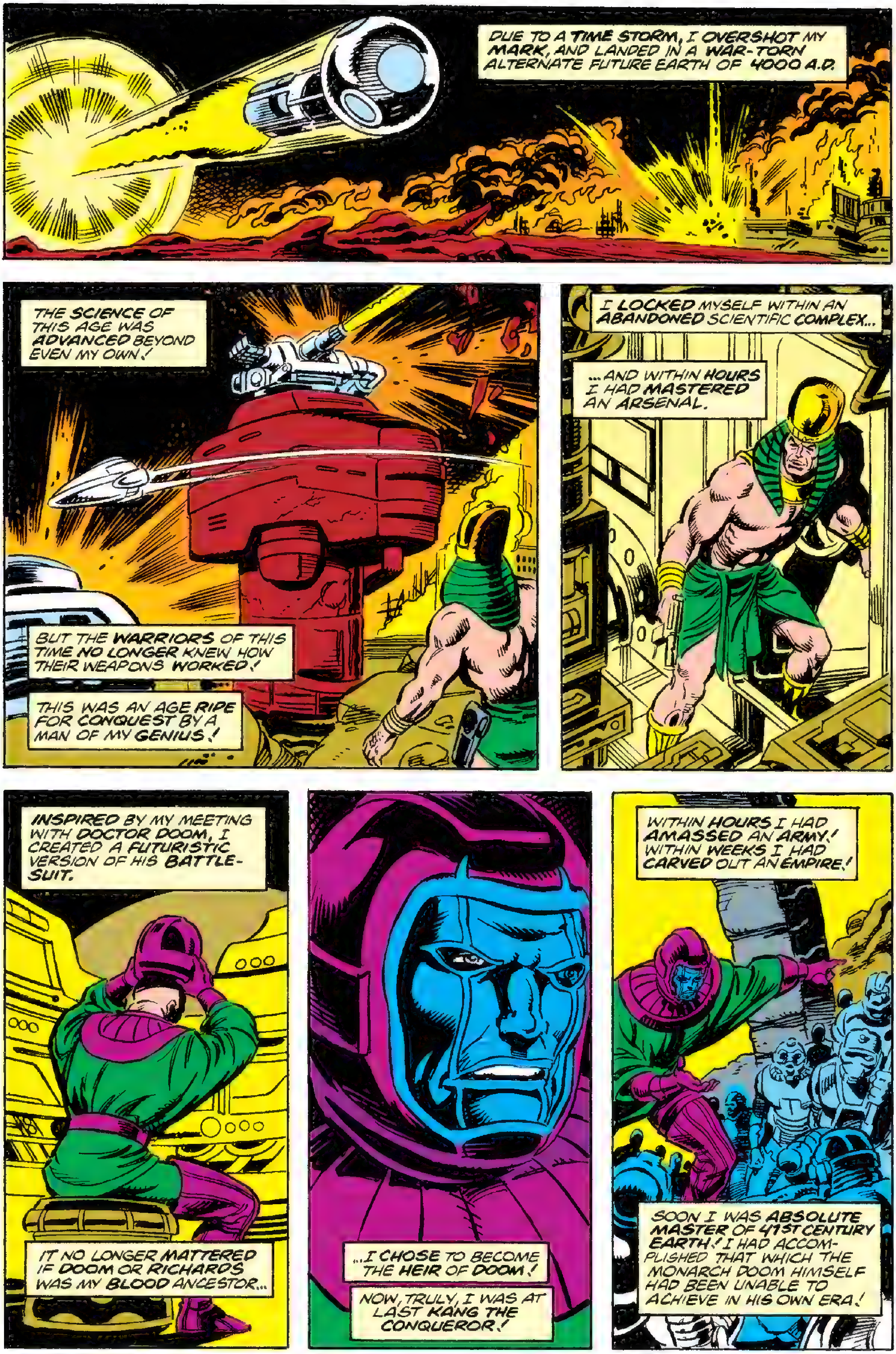

WHEN MY VISION RETURNED, I BECAME THE PHARAOH RAMA-TUT--
--NOT ONLY MY PEOPLE'S ABSOLUTE MONARCH, BUT THEIR GOD!

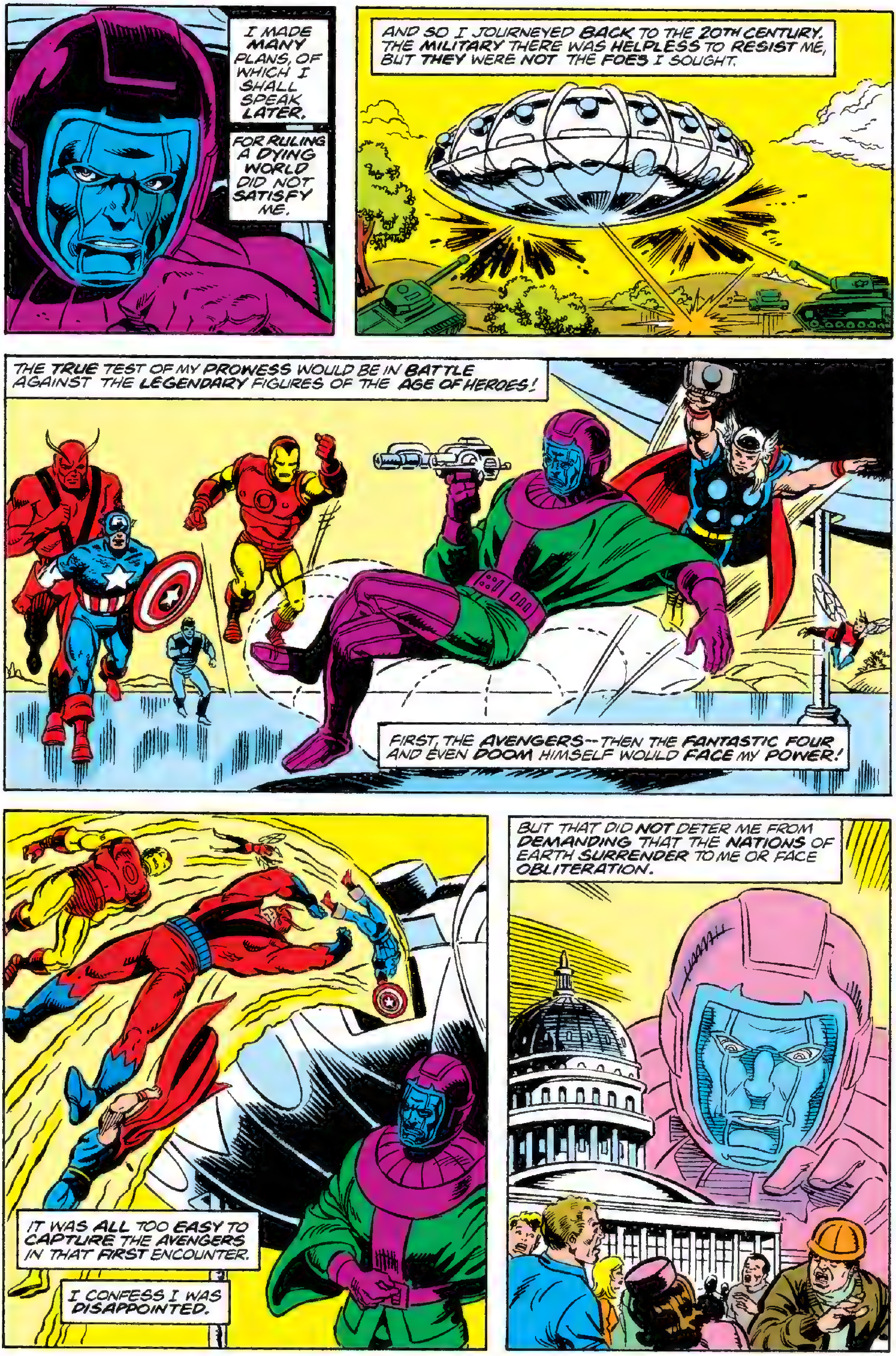

I QUICKLY PUT AN END TO THE WORSHIP OF THE OTHER GODS OF EGYPT.
BUT THERE I ERRED, FOR THOSE DEITIES WERE NOT MERE MYTHS, BUT REALITIES--
--AND ONE OF THEM, KHONSHU, TAKER OF VENGEANCE, REACHED OUT THROUGH TIME ITSELF TO BRING ABOUT MY DOWNFALL.

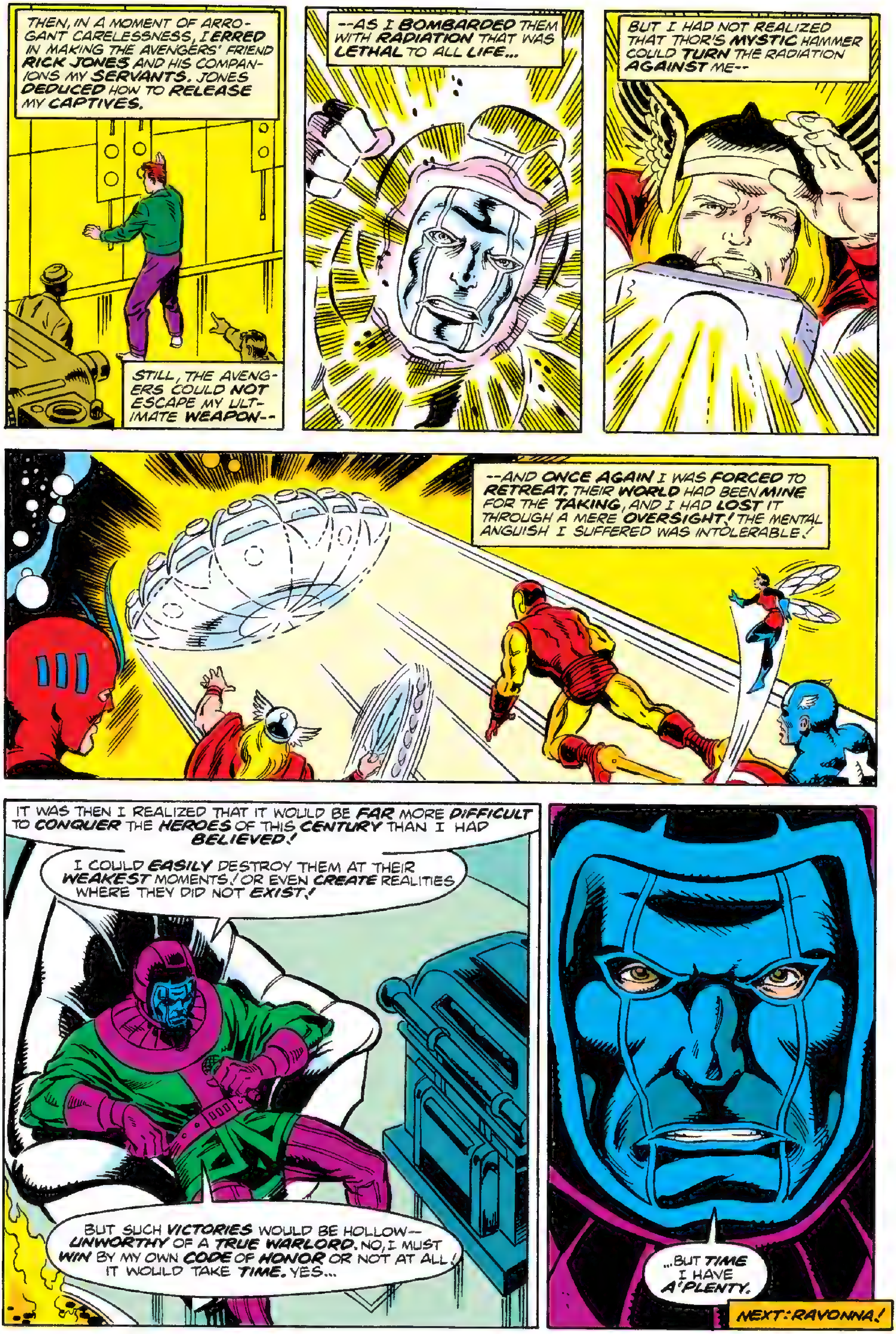

PERHAPS IT WAS HE WHO INSPIRED THE FANTASTIC FOUR TO TRAVEL TO THIS TIME TO SEEK MY CURE FOR BLINDNESS.
IT GAVE ME GREAT SATISFACTION TO MAKE THEM MY SLAVES.
BUT I HAD OTHER PLANS FOR THE INVISIBLE GIRL.
WHAT BETTER MATE FOR THE MASTER OF TIME--
--THAN THE FIRST OF THE GREAT SUPER-HEROINES?
BUT I LATER LEARNED KHONSHU HAD BROUGHT OTHER PLAYERS TO THIS TIME.
...THE SORCERER DOCTOR STRANGE WHO TRANSFORMED THE THING...
...ENABLING HIM TO ESCAPE HIS BONDS!
MEANWHILE, A PARTY OF AVENGERS SMASHED MY ROBOT ARMY!
BESET ON ALL SIDES, MY ONLY OPTION BECAME ESCAPE. IT WAS A BITTER RETREAT FOR ONE WHO WAS KNOWN AS-- THE CONQUEROR!

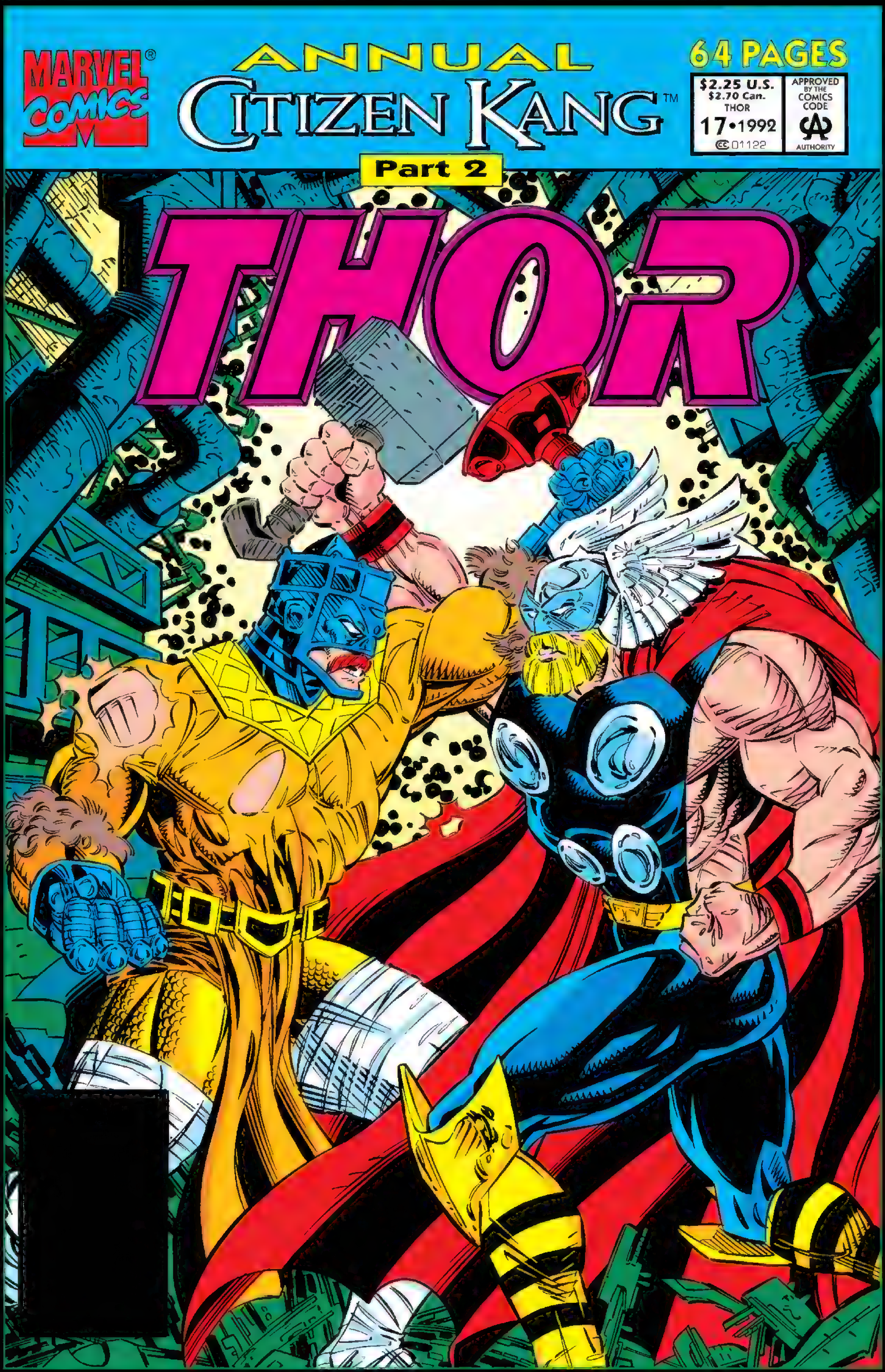

I HAD REPAIRED MY TIME SPHERE LONG BEFORE...
...SO I HEADED TOWARDS THE AGE OF HEROES ITSELF--
...LEAVING THE SPHINX BEHIND TO MYSTIFY MANKIND.
IN THE 20TH CENTURY I RESCUED DOCTOR DOOM HIMSELF FROM DEATH IN SPACE.
ONLY TO FIND MYSELF FACE TO FACE WITH A MAN I IDOLIZED, ENVIED AND FEARED! HE COULD EASILY HAVE DESTROYED ME...
...AND YET I WAS LOATH TO ATTACK HIM.
THIS WAS THE MAN WHO COULD BE MY ANCESTOR, YET AS WE STARED AT ONE ANOTHER, AS IF INTO A MIRROR, MESMERIZED...
WE EACH REALIZED THAT, SOMEHOW WE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE THE SAME AT DIFFERENT MOMENTS OF TIME.
I SENT DOOM BACK TO EARTH AND THEN TRAVELED BACK IN TIME A FEW MONTHS, ADOPTING THE NEW IDENTITY OF THE SCARLET CENTURION.
I WOULD CONQUER THE AGE OF THE AVENGERS USING THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES!


BY MESMERIZING THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS I CREATED A DIVERGENT TIMELINE--
--IN WHICH THEY TOOK OVER THE PLANET AT MY COMMAND!
THEN I USED AVENGERS FROM THE ORIGINAL TIMELINE--
--TO ELIMINATE MY POWERFUL PAWNS AS THREATS TO ME!
SO THEY DID, BUT THESE AVENGERS ALSO SUCCEEDED IN BANISHING ME FROM THE NEW TIMELINE, CREATING A NEW DIVERGENCE.
IN ONE REALITY, THE SCARLET CENTURION ESCAPED TO ANOTHER DIMENSION, WHERE HE BUILT AN EMPIRE--
--AND BECAME THE ARCH-FOE OF THE SQUADRON SUPREME!
BUT IN MY TIMELINE, I RETURNED TO MY ROLE OF RAMA-TUT...
...AND SET SAIL FOR MY OWN TIME PERIOD.


DUE TO A TIME STORM, I OVERSHOT MY MARK, AND LANDED IN A WAR-TORN ALTERNATE FUTURE EARTH OF 4000 A.D.
THE SCIENCE OF THIS AGE WAS ADVANCED BEYOND EVEN MY OWN!
BUT THE WARRIORS OF THIS TIME NO LONGER KNEW HOW THEIR WEAPONS WORKED!
THIS WAS AN AGE RIPE FOR CONQUEST BY A MAN OF MY GENIUS!
I LOCKED MYSELF WITHIN AN ABANDONED SCIENTIFIC COMPLEX...
...AND WITHIN HOURS I HAD MASTERED AN ARSENAL.
INSPIRED BY MY MEETING WITH DOCTOR DOOM, I CREATED A FUTURISTIC VERSION OF HIS BATTLE-SUIT.
IT NO LONGER MATTERED IF DOOM OR RICHARDS WAS MY BLOOD ANCESTOR...
...I CHOSE TO BECOME THE HEIR OF DOOM!
NOW, TRULY, I WAS AT LAST KANG THE CONQUEROR!
WITHIN HOURS I HAD AMASSED AN ARMY! WITHIN WEEKS I HAD CARVED OUT AN EMPIRE!
SOON I WAS ABSOLUTE MASTER OF 41ST CENTURY EARTH! I HAD ACCOMPLISHED THAT WHICH THE MONARCH DOOM HIMSELF HAD BEEN UNABLE TO ACHIEVE IN HIS OWN ERA!


I MADE MANY PLANS, OF WHICH I SHALL SPEAK LATER.
FOR RULING A DYING WORLD DID NOT SATISFY ME.
AND SO I JOURNEYED BACK TO THE 20TH CENTURY. THE MILITARY THERE WAS HELPLESS TO RESIST ME, BUT THEY WERE NOT THE FOES I SOUGHT.
THE TRUE TEST OF MY PROWESS WOULD BE IN BATTLE AGAINST THE LEGENDARY FIGURES OF THE AGE OF HEROES!
FIRST, THE AVENGERS--THEN THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND EVEN DOOM HIMSELF WOULD FACE MY POWER!
IT WAS ALL TOO EASY TO CAPTURE THE AVENGERS IN THAT FIRST ENCOUNTER.
I CONFESS I WAS DISAPPOINTED.
BUT THAT DID NOT DETER ME FROM DEMANDING THAT THE NATIONS OF EARTH SURRENDER TO ME OR FACE OBLITERATION.


THEN, IN A MOMENT OF ARROGANT CARELESSNESS, I ERRED IN MAKING THE AVENGERS' FRIEND RICK JONES AND HIS COMPANIONS MY SERVANTS. JONES DEDUCED HOW TO RELEASE MY CAPTIVES.
STILL, THE AVENGERS COULD NOT ESCAPE MY ULTIMATE WEAPON--
--AS I BOMBARDED THEM WITH RADIATION THAT WAS LETHAL TO ALL LIFE...
BUT I HAD NOT REALIZED THAT THOR'S MYSTIC HAMMER COULD TURN THE RADIATION AGAINST ME--
--AND ONCE AGAIN I WAS FORCED TO RETREAT. THEIR WORLD HAD BEEN MINE FOR THE TAKING, AND I HAD LOST IT THROUGH A MERE OVERSIGHT! THE MENTAL ANGUISH I SUFFERED WAS INTOLERABLE!
IT WAS THEN I REALIZED THAT IT WOULD BE FAR MORE DIFFICULT TO CONQUER THE HEROES OF THIS CENTURY THAN I HAD BELIEVED!
I COULD EASILY DESTROY THEM AT THEIR WEAKEST MOMENTS! OR EVEN CREATE REALITIES WHERE THEY DID NOT EXIST!
BUT SUCH VICTORIES WOULD BE HOLLOW-- UNWORTHY OF A TRUE WARLORD. NO, I MUST WIN BY MY OWN CODE OF HONOR OR NOT AT ALL! IT WOULD TAKE TIME. YES...
...BUT TIME I HAVE A'PLENTY.
NEXT: RAVONNA!


MARVEL COMICS
ANNUAL
CITIZEN KANG™
64 PAGES
$2.25 U.S.
$2.70 Can.
THOR
17•1992
01122
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Part 2
THOR

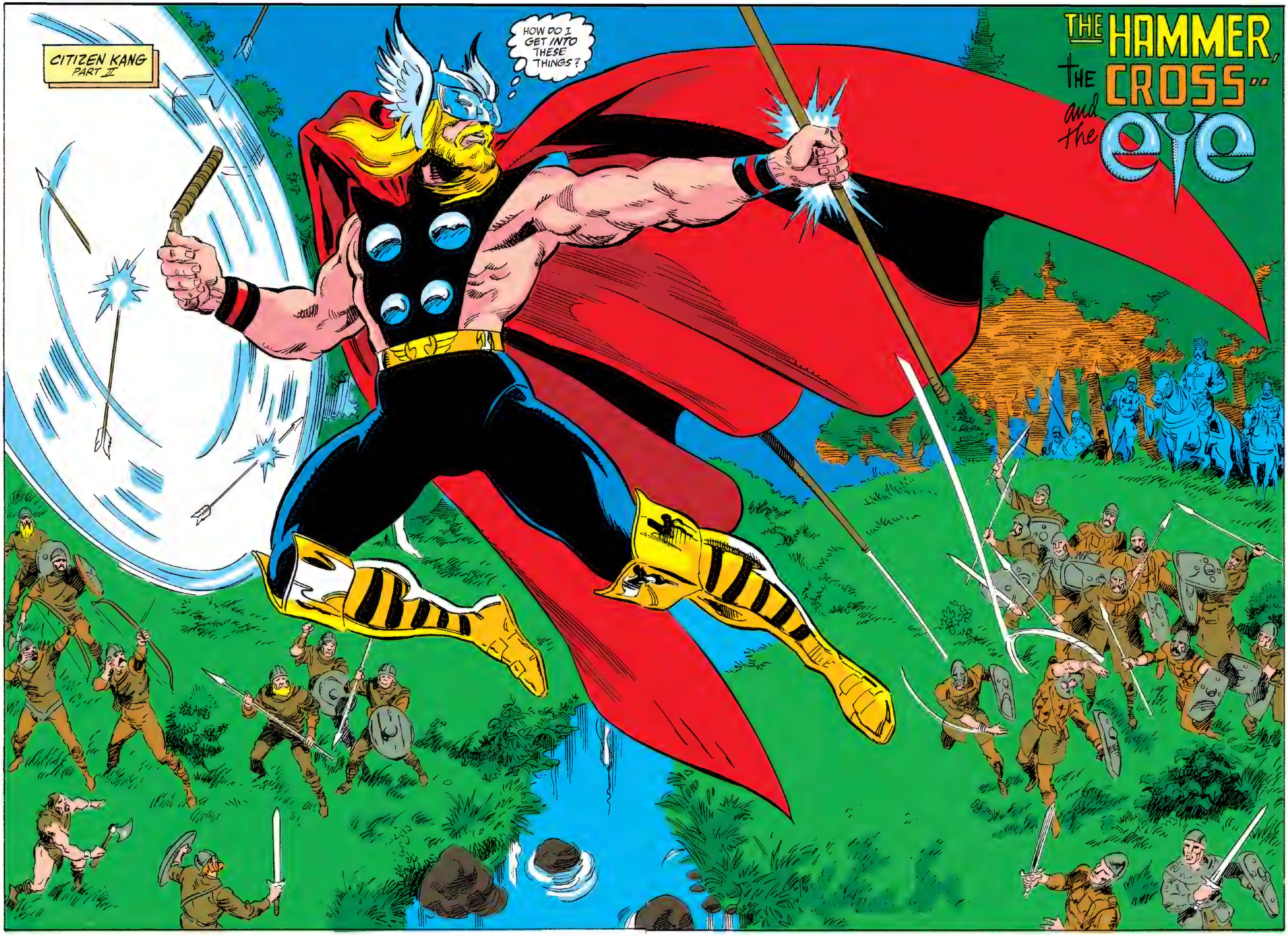
"THE HAMMER, THE CROSS — AND THE EYE"

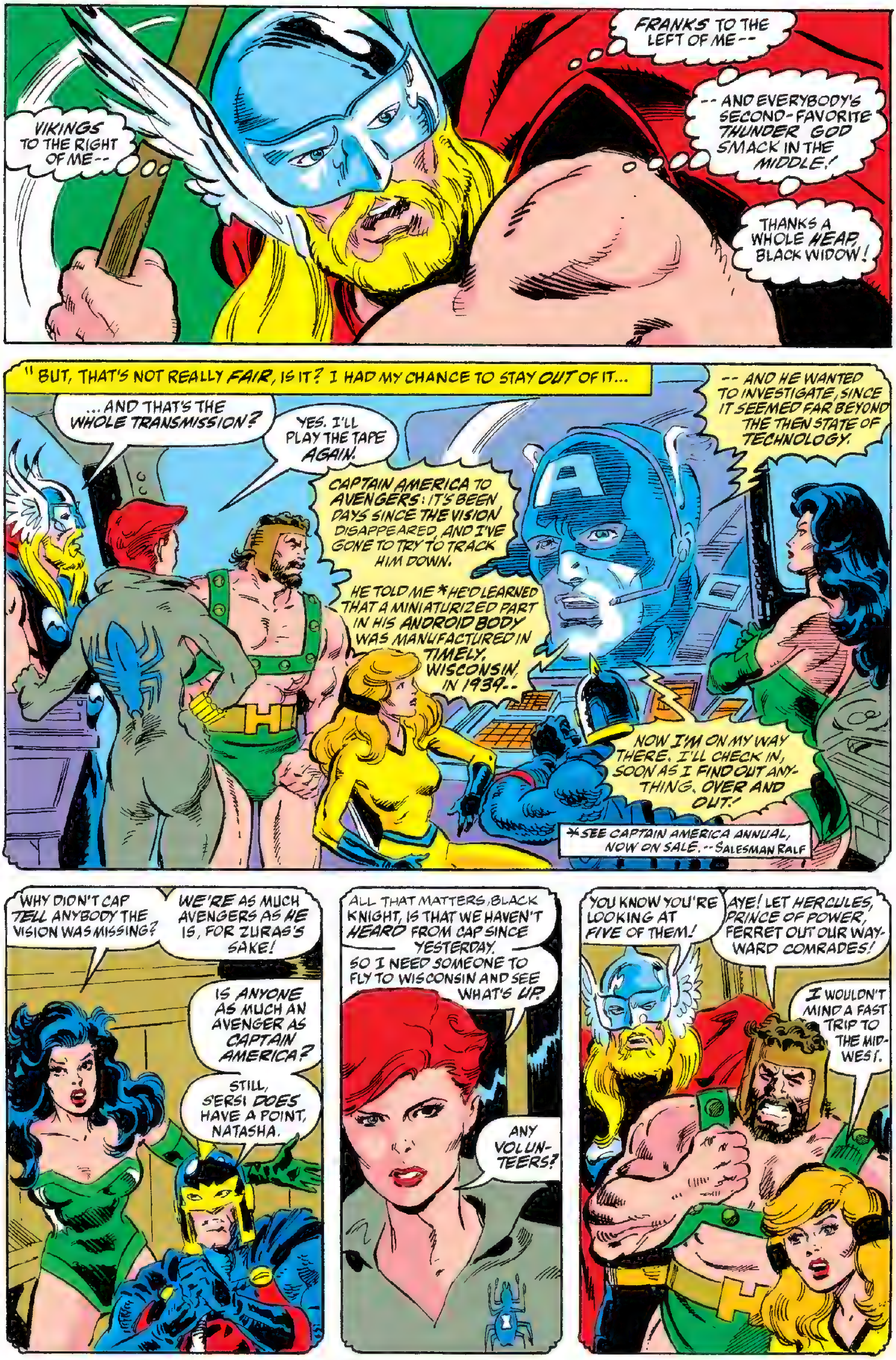
WRITER: ROY THOMAS • PENCILER: GEOF ISHERWOOD • INKER: FRED FREDERICKS • COLORIST: TOM SMITH • LETTERER: RICK PARKER

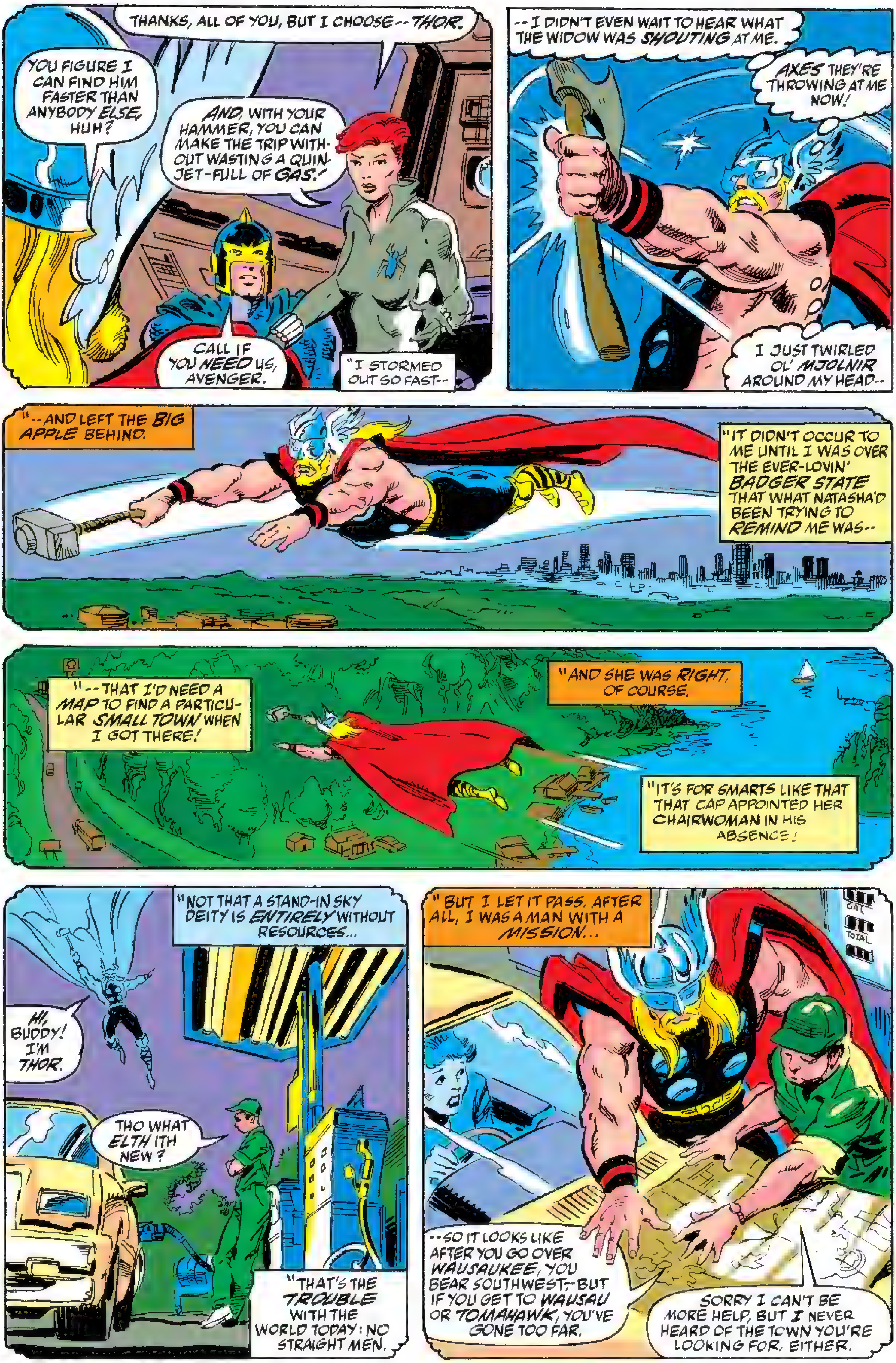
"PARADISE LOST"

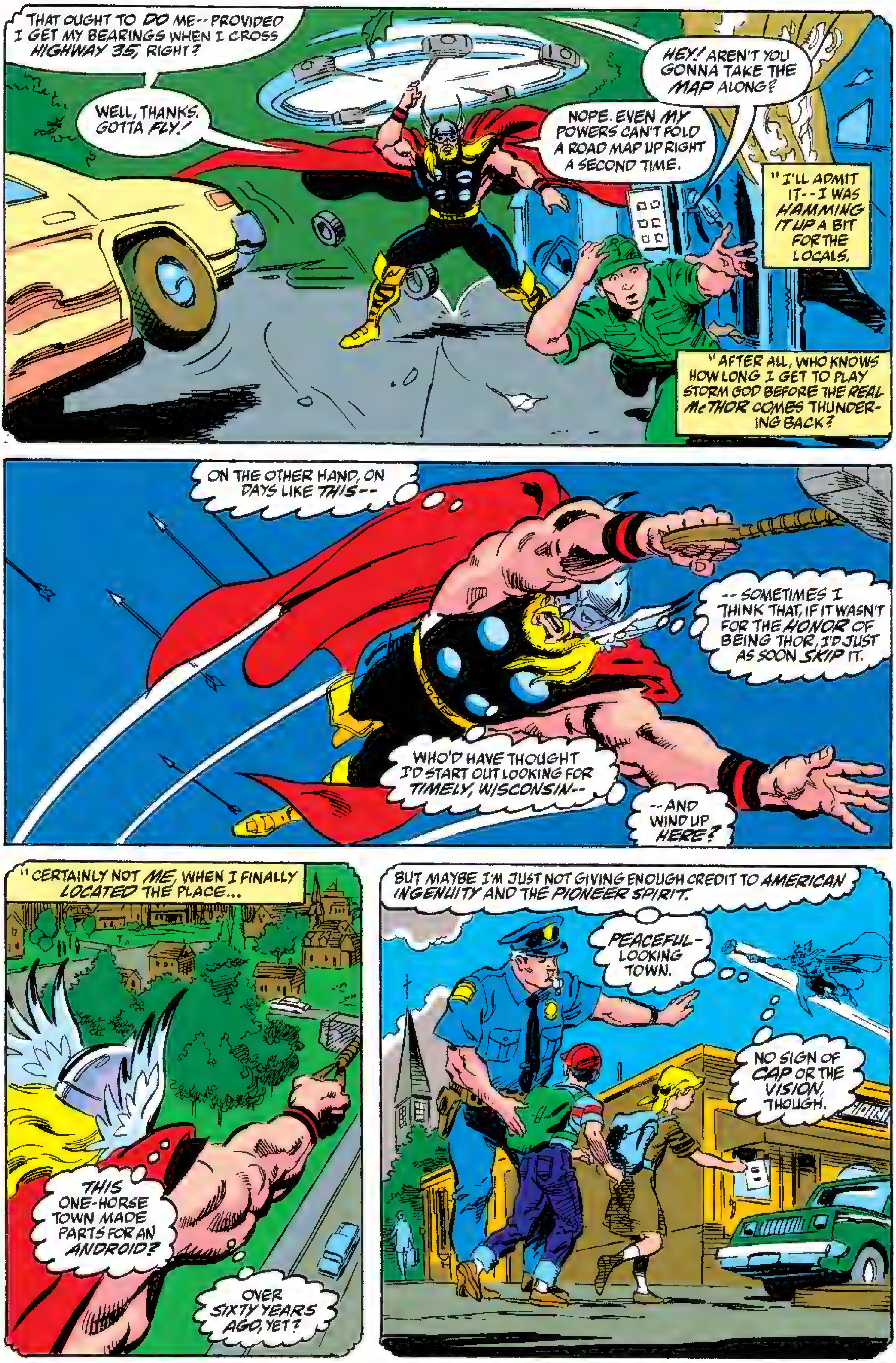
WRITER: PETER SANDERSON • PENCILER: RICH YANIZESKI • INKER: FRED FREDERICKS • COLORIST: CHRISTIE SCHEELE • LETTERER: DAVE SHARPE

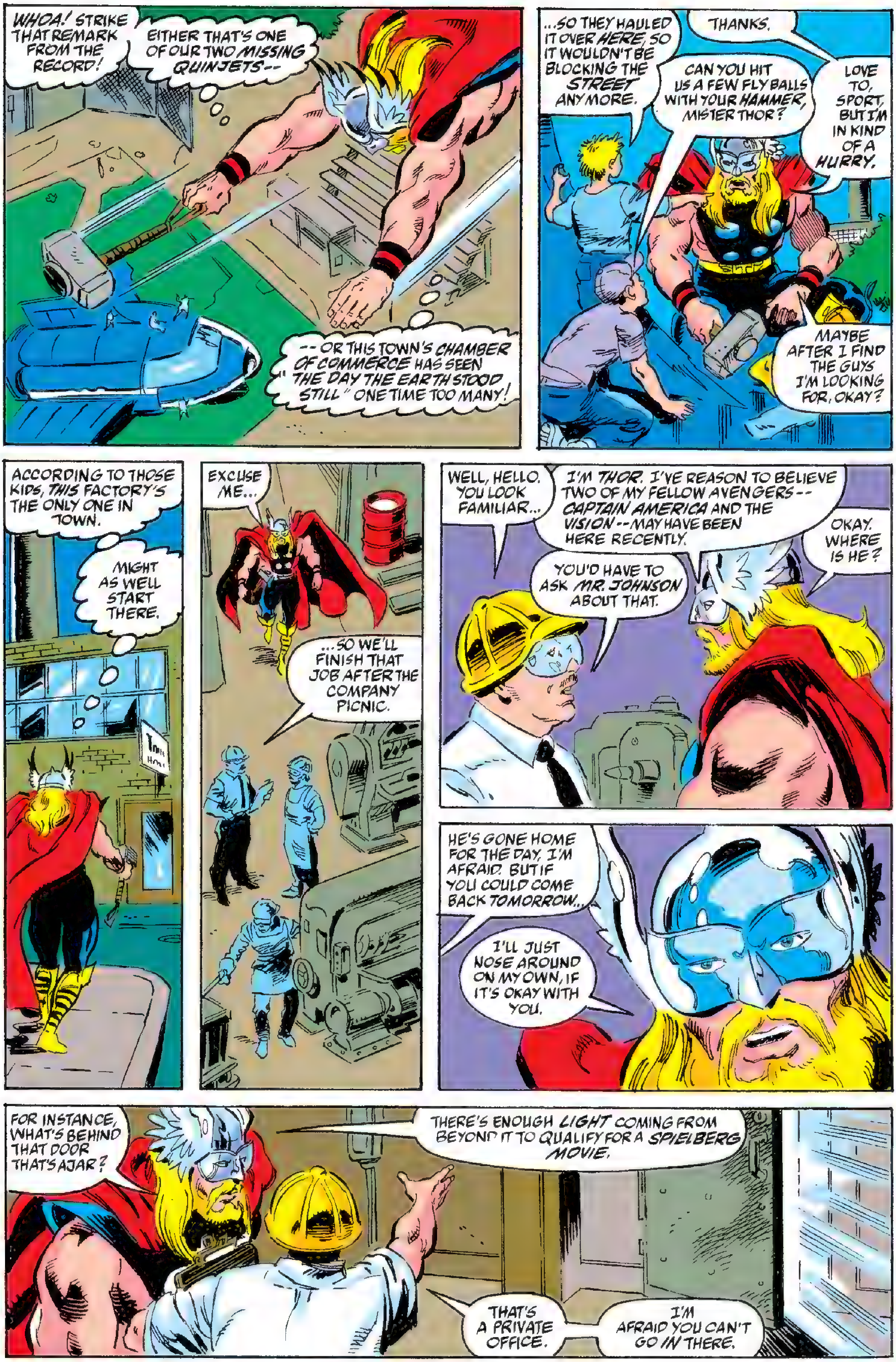
ASSISTANT EDITOR: PAT GARRAHY • EDITOR: RALPH MACCHIO

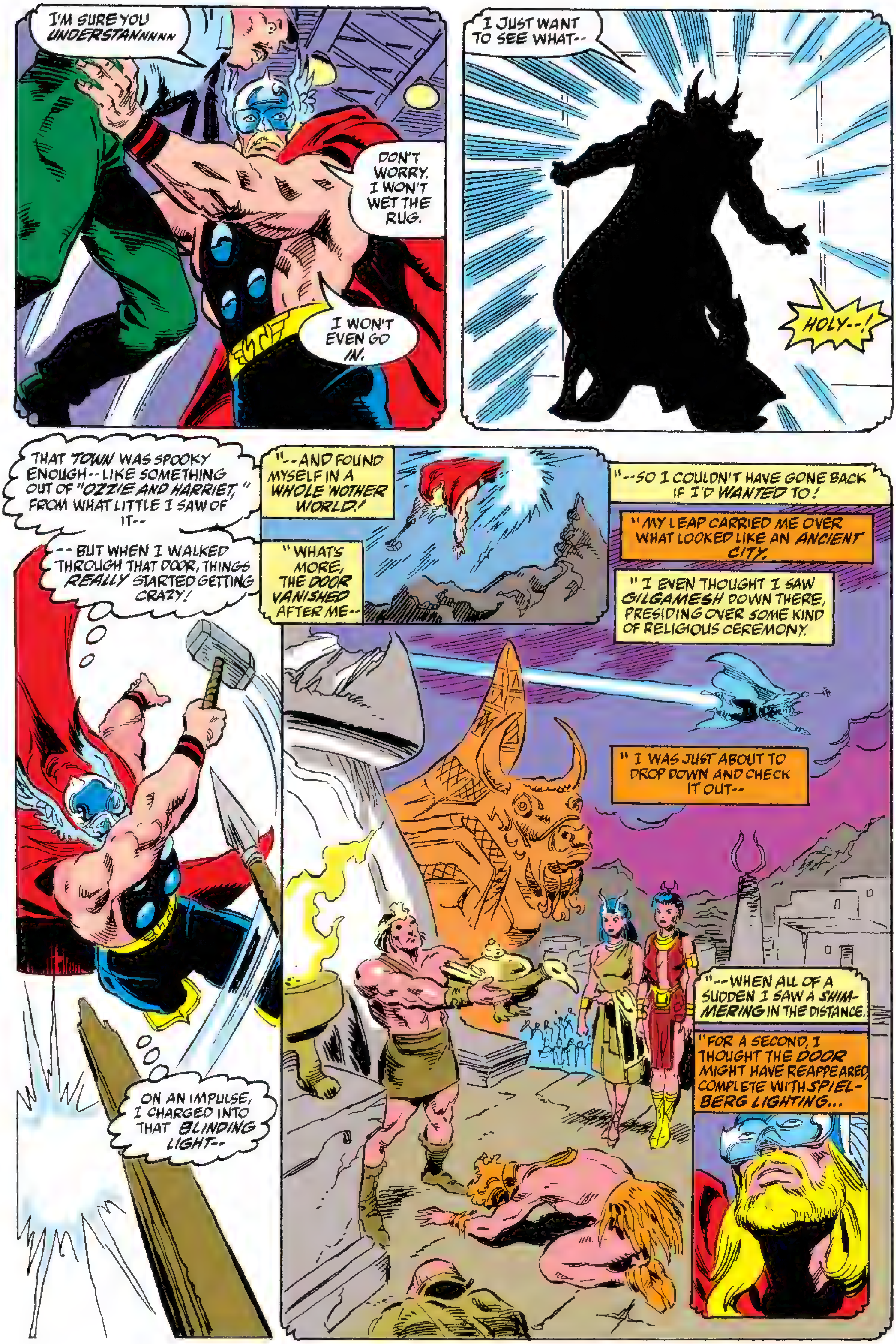

CITIZEN KANG PART II
HOW DO I GET INTO THESE THINGS?
THE HAMMER, THE CROSS.. and the eye

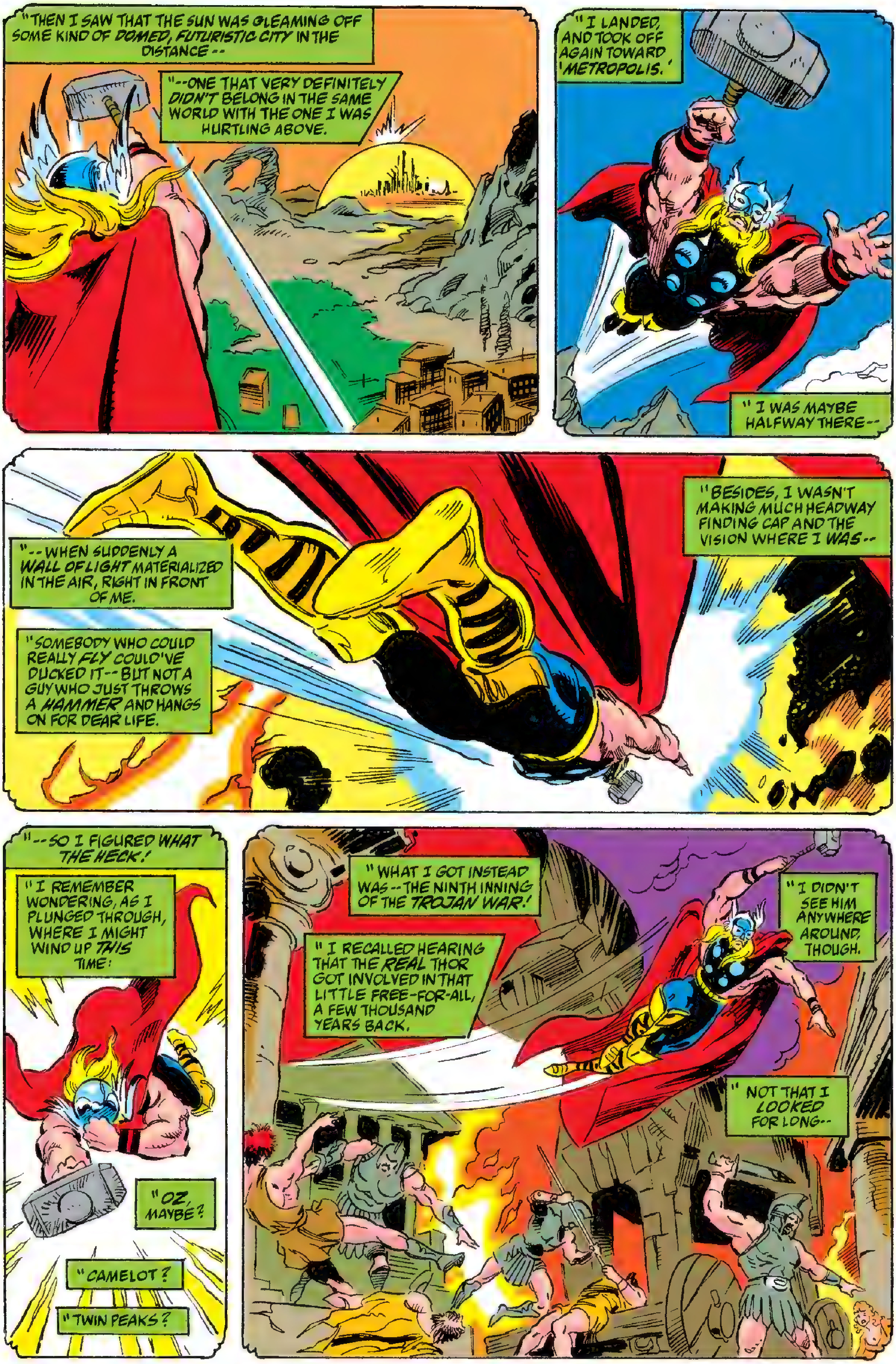

VIKINGS TO THE RIGHT OF ME--
FRANKS TO THE LEFT OF ME--
--AND EVERYBODY'S SECOND-FAVORITE THUNDER GOD SMACK IN THE MIDDLE!
THANKS A WHOLE HEAP, BLACK WIDOW!
"BUT, THAT'S NOT REALLY FAIR, IS IT? I HAD MY CHANCE TO STAY OUT OF IT...
...AND THAT'S THE WHOLE TRANSMISSION?
YES. I'LL PLAY THE TAPE AGAIN.
CAPTAIN AMERICA TO AVENGERS: IT'S BEEN DAYS SINCE THE VISION DISAPPEARED, AND I'VE GONE TO TRY TO TRACK HIM DOWN.
HE TOLD ME* HE'D LEARNED THAT A MINIATURIZED PART IN HIS ANDROID BODY WAS MANUFACTURED IN TIMELY, WISCONSIN, IN 1939--
--AND HE WANTED TO INVESTIGATE, SINCE IT SEEMED FAR BEYOND THE THEN STATE OF TECHNOLOGY.
NOW I'M ON MY WAY THERE. I'LL CHECK IN, SOON AS I FIND OUT ANYTHING. OVER AND OUT!
*SEE CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL, NOW ON SALE. --SALESMAN RALF
WHY DIDN'T CAP TELL ANYBODY THE VISION WAS MISSING?
WE'RE AS MUCH AVENGERS AS HE IS, FOR ZURAS'S SAKE!
IS ANYONE AS MUCH AN AVENGER AS CAPTAIN AMERICA?
STILL, SERSI DOES HAVE A POINT, NATASHA.
ALL THAT MATTERS, BLACK KNIGHT, IS THAT WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM CAP SINCE YESTERDAY. SO I NEED SOMEONE TO FLY TO WISCONSIN AND SEE WHAT'S UP.
ANY VOLUNTEERS?
YOU KNOW YOU'RE LOOKING AT FIVE OF THEM!
AYE! LET HERCULES, PRINCE OF POWER, FERRET OUT OUR WAYWARD COMRADES!
I WOULDN'T MIND A FAST TRIP TO THE MIDWEST.

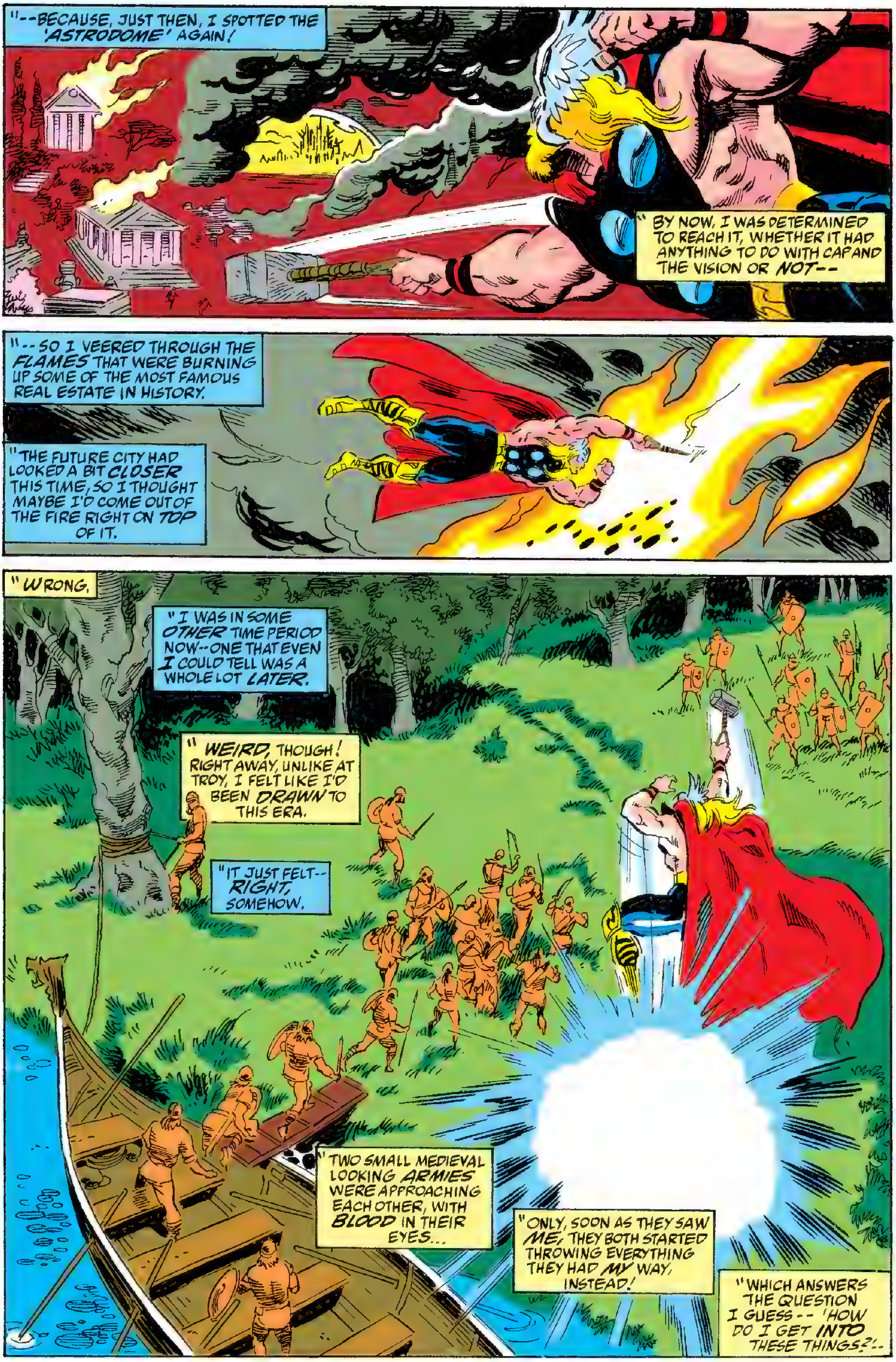

THANKS, ALL OF YOU, BUT I CHOOSE-- *THOR.*
YOU FIGURE I CAN FIND HIM FASTER THAN ANYBODY *ELSE*, HUH?
AND, WITH YOUR HAMMER, YOU CAN MAKE THE TRIP WITHOUT WASTING A QUINJET-FULL OF *GAS!*
CALL IF YOU *NEED* US, AVENGER.
"I STORMED OUT SO FAST--
--I DIDN'T EVEN WAIT TO HEAR WHAT THE WIDOW WAS *SHOUTING* AT ME.
AXES THEY'RE THROWING AT ME NOW!
I JUST TWIRLED OL' *MJOLNIR* AROUND MY HEAD--
"--AND LEFT THE *BIG APPLE* BEHIND.
"IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO ME UNTIL I WAS OVER THE EVER-LOVIN' *BADGER STATE* THAT WHAT NATASHA'D BEEN TRYING TO *REMIND* ME WAS--
"--THAT I'D NEED A *MAP* TO FIND A PARTICULAR *SMALL TOWN* WHEN I GOT THERE!
"AND SHE WAS *RIGHT*, OF COURSE.
"IT'S FOR SMARTS LIKE THAT THAT CAP APPOINTED HER CHAIRWOMAN IN HIS ABSENCE!
"NOT THAT A STAND-IN SKY DEITY IS *ENTIRELY* WITHOUT RESOURCES...
HI, BUDDY! I'M *THOR.*
THO WHAT *ELTH* ITH NEW?
"THAT'S THE *TROUBLE* WITH THE WORLD TODAY: NO STRAIGHT MEN.
"BUT I LET IT PASS. AFTER ALL, I WAS A MAN WITH A *MISSION...*
GAL
TOTAL
--SO IT LOOKS LIKE AFTER YOU GO OVER *WAUSAUKEE*, YOU BEAR SOUTHWEST--BUT IF YOU GET TO *WAUSAU* OR *TOMAHAWK*, YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR.
SORRY I CAN'T BE MORE HELP, BUT *I* NEVER HEARD OF THE TOWN YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, EITHER.

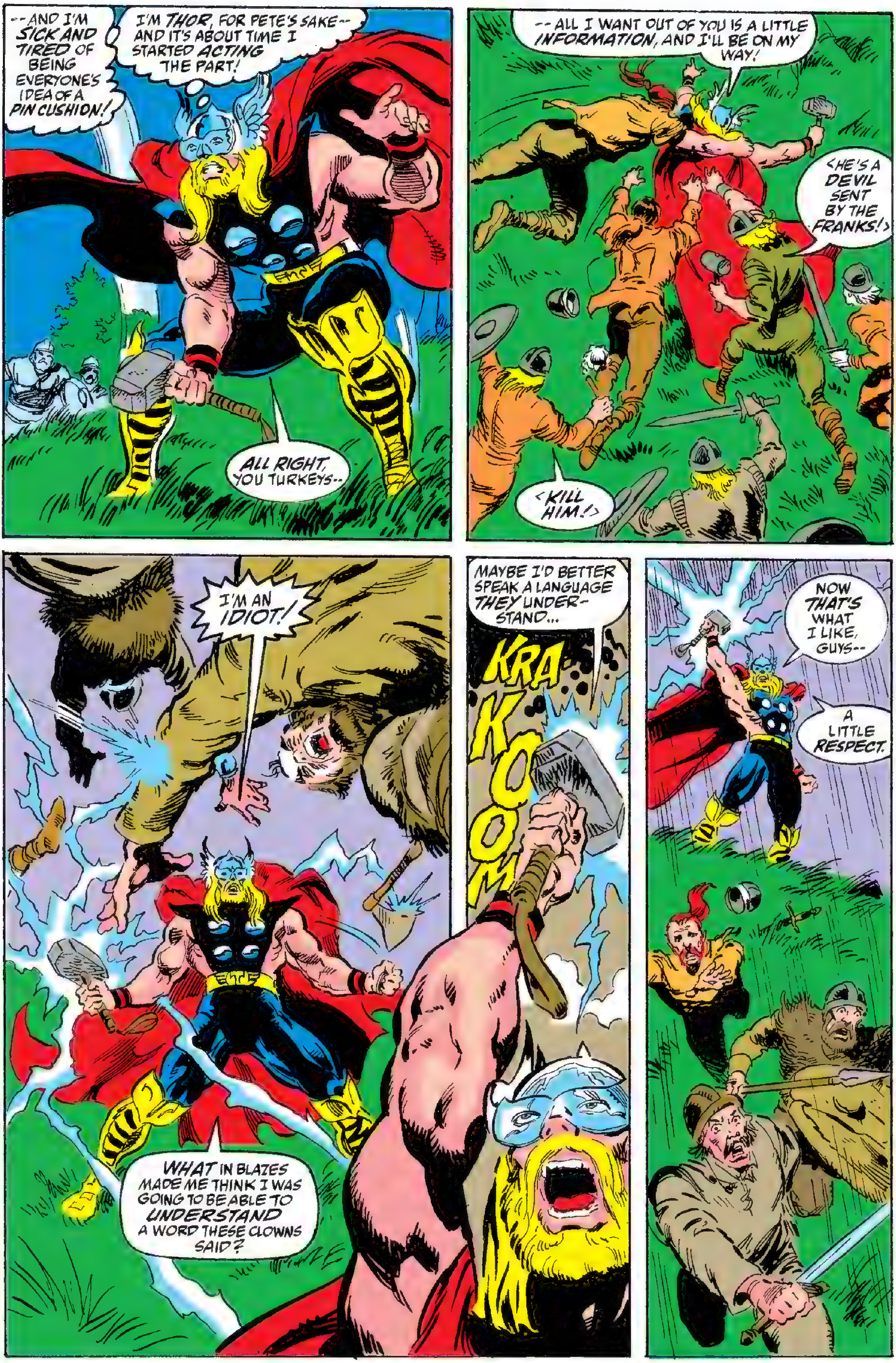

THAT OUGHT TO *DO* ME--PROVIDED I GET MY BEARINGS WHEN I CROSS *HIGHWAY 35,* RIGHT?
WELL, THANKS. GOTTA *FLY!*
HEY! AREN'T YOU GONNA TAKE THE *MAP* ALONG?
NOPE. EVEN *MY* POWERS CAN'T FOLD A ROAD MAP UP RIGHT A SECOND TIME.
"I'LL ADMIT IT--I WAS *HAMMING IT UP* A BIT FOR THE LOCALS.
"AFTER ALL, WHO KNOWS HOW LONG I GET TO PLAY STORM GOD BEFORE THE REAL *McTHOR* COMES THUNDERING BACK?
ON THE OTHER HAND, ON DAYS LIKE *THIS*--
--SOMETIMES I THINK THAT, IF IT WASN'T FOR THE *HONOR* OF BEING THOR, I'D JUST AS SOON *SKIP* IT.
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT I'D START OUT LOOKING FOR *TIMELY, WISCONSIN*--
--AND WIND UP *HERE?*
"CERTAINLY NOT *ME,* WHEN I FINALLY *LOCATED* THE PLACE...
THIS ONE-HORSE TOWN MADE PARTS FOR AN *ANDROID?*
OVER SIXTY YEARS AGO, YET?
BUT MAYBE I'M JUST NOT GIVING ENOUGH CREDIT TO *AMERICAN INGENUITY* AND THE *PIONEER SPIRIT.*
PEACEFUL-LOOKING TOWN.
NO SIGN OF *CAP* OR THE *VISION,* THOUGH.

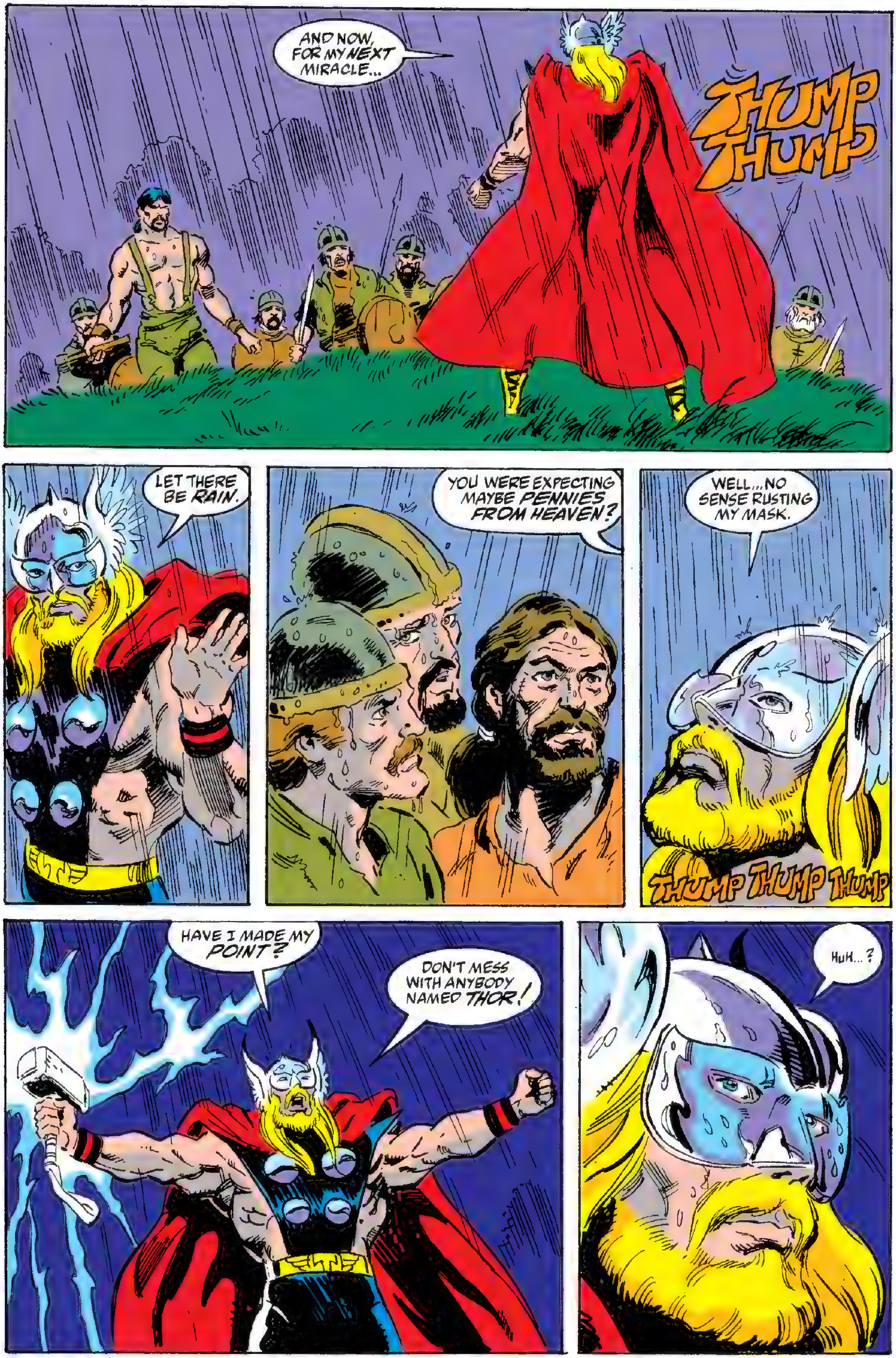

WHOA! STRIKE THAT REMARK FROM THE RECORD!
EITHER THAT'S ONE OF OUR TWO MISSING QUINJETS--
--OR THIS TOWN'S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS SEEN "THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL" ONE TIME TOO MANY!
...SO THEY HAULED IT OVER HERE, SO IT WOULDN'T BE BLOCKING THE STREET ANYMORE.
THANKS.
CAN YOU HIT US A FEW FLY BALLS WITH YOUR HAMMER, MISTER THOR?
LOVE TO, SPORT, BUT I'M IN KIND OF A HURRY.
MAYBE AFTER I FIND THE GUYS I'M LOOKING FOR, OKAY?
ACCORDING TO THOSE KIDS, THIS FACTORY'S THE ONLY ONE IN TOWN.
MIGHT AS WELL START THERE.
EXCUSE ME...
...SO WE'LL FINISH THAT JOB AFTER THE COMPANY PICNIC.
WELL, HELLO. YOU LOOK FAMILIAR...
I'M THOR. I'VE REASON TO BELIEVE TWO OF MY FELLOW AVENGERS--CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE VISION--MAY HAVE BEEN HERE RECENTLY.
YOU'D HAVE TO ASK MR. JOHNSON ABOUT THAT.
OKAY. WHERE IS HE?
HE'S GONE HOME FOR THE DAY, I'M AFRAID. BUT IF YOU COULD COME BACK TOMORROW...
I'LL JUST NOSE AROUND ON MY OWN, IF IT'S OKAY WITH YOU.
FOR INSTANCE, WHAT'S BEHIND THAT DOOR THAT'S AJAR?
THERE'S ENOUGH LIGHT COMING FROM BEYOND IT TO QUALIFY FOR A SPIELBERG MOVIE.
THAT'S A PRIVATE OFFICE.
I'M AFRAID YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE.

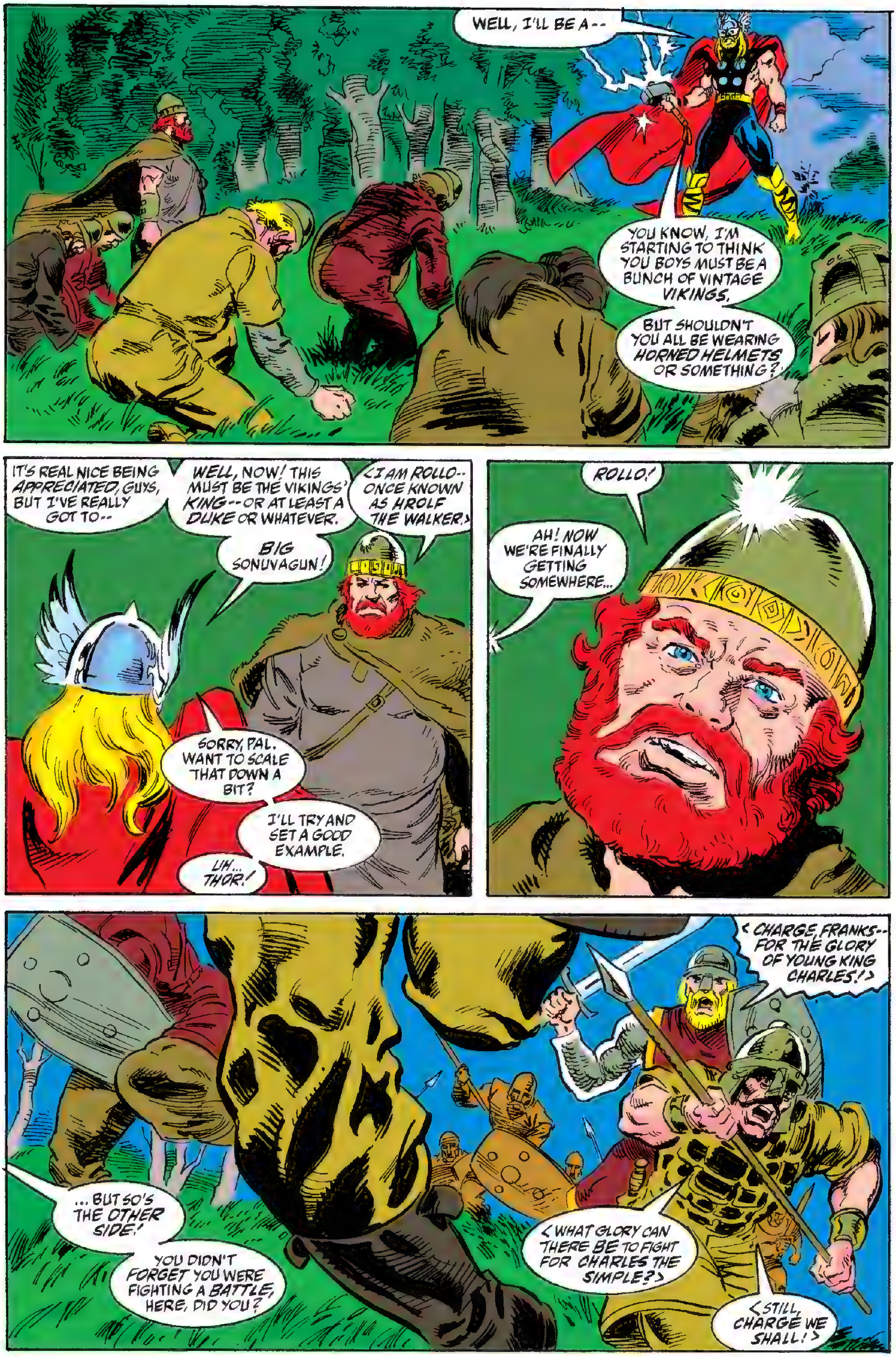

I'M SURE YOU *UNDERSTANNNNN*
DON'T WORRY. I WON'T WET THE RUG.
I WON'T EVEN GO *IN*.
I JUST WANT TO SEE WHAT--
HOLY--!
THAT *TOWN* WAS SPOOKY ENOUGH--LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF "*OZZIE AND HARRIET*," FROM WHAT LITTLE I SAW OF IT--
--BUT WHEN I WALKED THROUGH THAT DOOR, THINGS *REALLY* STARTED GETTING CRAZY!
ON AN IMPULSE, I CHARGED INTO THAT *BLINDING LIGHT*--
"--AND FOUND MYSELF IN A *WHOLE 'NOTHER WORLD!*
"WHAT'S MORE, THE *DOOR VANISHED* AFTER ME--
"--SO I COULDN'T HAVE GONE BACK IF I'D *WANTED* TO!
"MY LEAP CARRIED ME OVER WHAT LOOKED LIKE AN *ANCIENT CITY*.
"I EVEN THOUGHT I SAW *GILGAMESH* DOWN THERE, PRESIDING OVER SOME KIND OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONY.
"I WAS JUST ABOUT TO DROP DOWN AND CHECK IT OUT--
"--WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN I SAW A *SHIMMERING* IN THE DISTANCE.
"FOR A SECOND, I THOUGHT THE *DOOR* MIGHT HAVE REAPPEARED, COMPLETE WITH *SPIELBERG LIGHTING*...

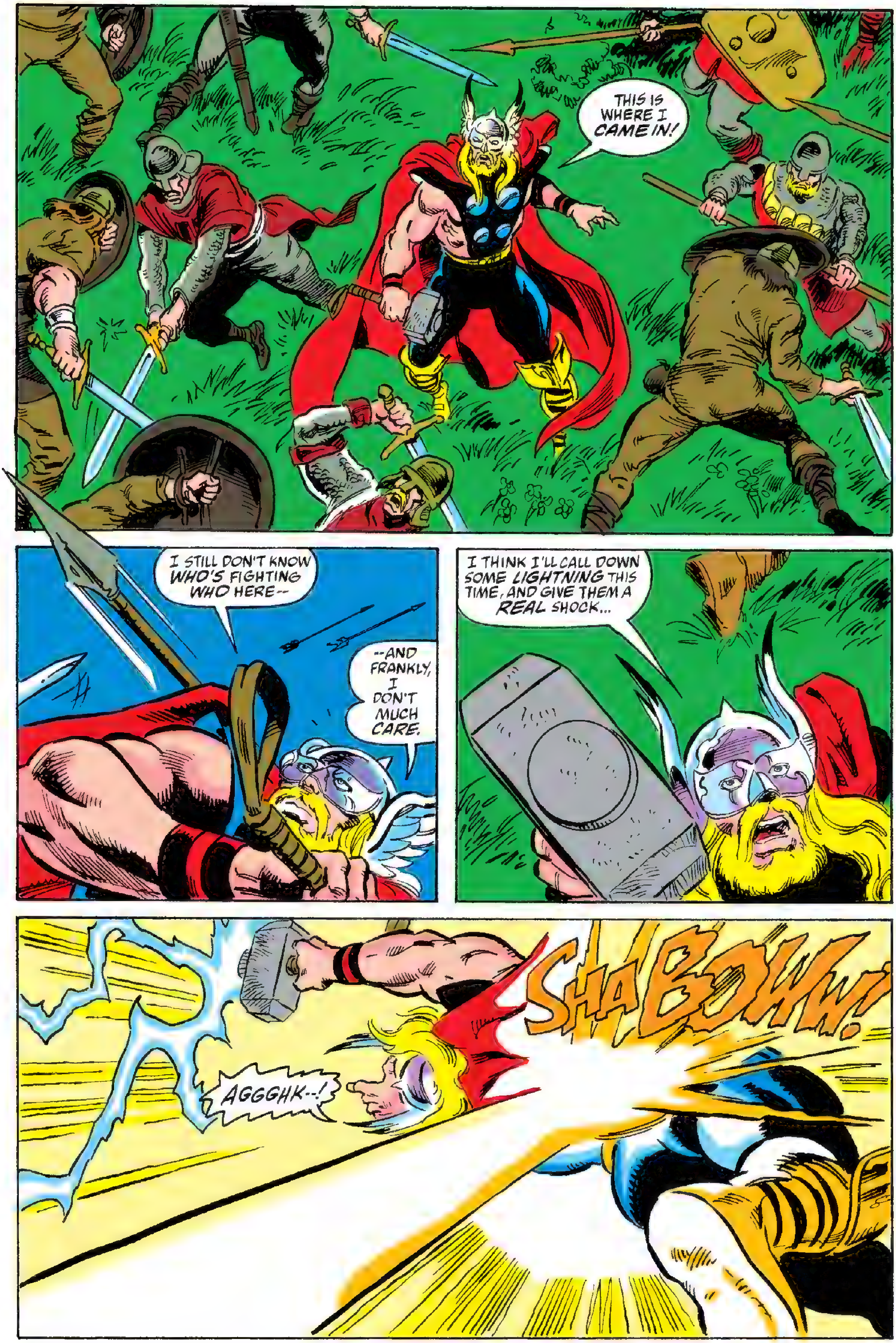

"THEN I SAW THAT THE SUN WAS GLEAMING OFF SOME KIND OF *DOMED, FUTURISTIC CITY* IN THE DISTANCE --
"--ONE THAT VERY DEFINITELY *DIDN'T* BELONG IN THE SAME WORLD WITH THE ONE I WAS HURTLING ABOVE.
"I LANDED, AND TOOK OFF AGAIN TOWARD '*METROPOLIS*.'
"I WAS MAYBE HALFWAY THERE--
"--WHEN SUDDENLY A *WALL OF LIGHT* MATERIALIZED IN THE AIR, RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.
"SOMEBODY WHO COULD REALLY *FLY* COULD'VE DUCKED IT--BUT NOT A GUY WHO JUST THROWS A *HAMMER* AND HANGS ON FOR DEAR LIFE.
"BESIDES, I WASN'T MAKING MUCH HEADWAY FINDING CAP AND THE VISION WHERE I *WAS*--
"--SO I FIGURED *WHAT THE HECK*!
"I REMEMBER WONDERING, AS I PLUNGED THROUGH, WHERE I MIGHT WIND UP *THIS* TIME:
"OZ, MAYBE?
"CAMELOT?
"TWIN PEAKS?
"WHAT I GOT INSTEAD WAS--THE NINTH INNING OF THE *TROJAN WAR*!
"I RECALLED HEARING THAT THE *REAL* THOR GOT INVOLVED IN THAT LITTLE FREE-FOR-ALL, A FEW THOUSAND YEARS BACK.
"I DIDN'T SEE HIM ANYWHERE AROUND, THOUGH.
"NOT THAT I *LOOKED* FOR LONG--

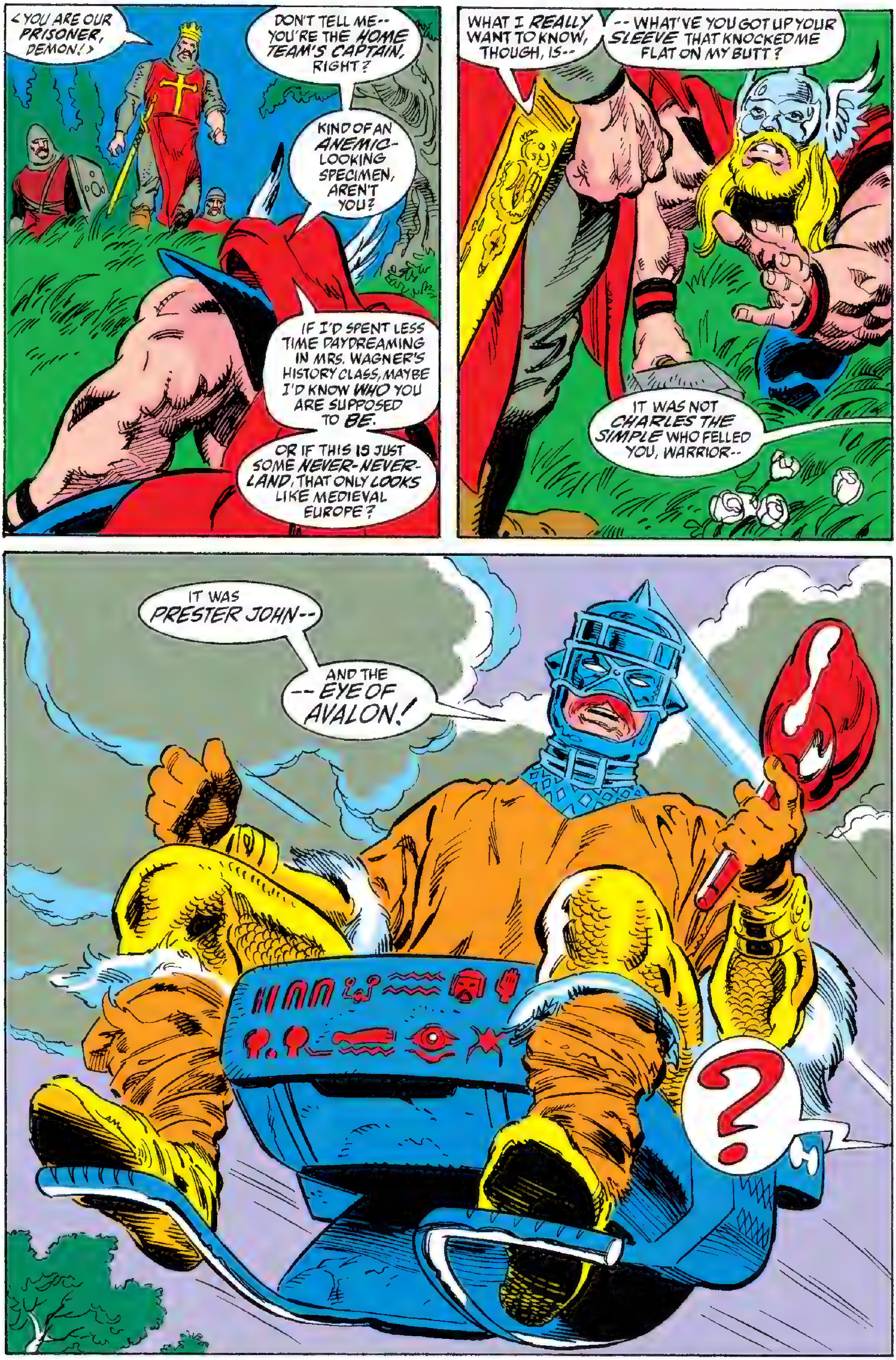

"--BECAUSE, JUST THEN, I SPOTTED THE 'ASTRODOME' AGAIN!
"BY NOW, I WAS DETERMINED TO REACH IT, WHETHER IT HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH CAP AND THE VISION OR NOT--
"--SO I VEERED THROUGH THE FLAMES THAT WERE BURNING UP SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS REAL ESTATE IN HISTORY.
"THE FUTURE CITY HAD LOOKED A BIT CLOSER THIS TIME, SO I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D COME OUT OF THE FIRE RIGHT ON TOP OF IT.
"WRONG.
"I WAS IN SOME OTHER TIME PERIOD NOW--ONE THAT EVEN I COULD TELL WAS A WHOLE LOT LATER.
"WEIRD, THOUGH! RIGHT AWAY, UNLIKE AT TROY, I FELT LIKE I'D BEEN DRAWN TO THIS ERA.
"IT JUST FELT--RIGHT, SOMEHOW.
TWO SMALL MEDIEVAL LOOKING ARMIES WERE APPROACHING EACH OTHER, WITH BLOOD IN THEIR EYES...
"ONLY, SOON AS THEY SAW ME, THEY BOTH STARTED THROWING EVERYTHING THEY HAD MY WAY, INSTEAD!
"WHICH ANSWERS THE QUESTION I GUESS-- 'HOW DO I GET INTO THESE THINGS?'..

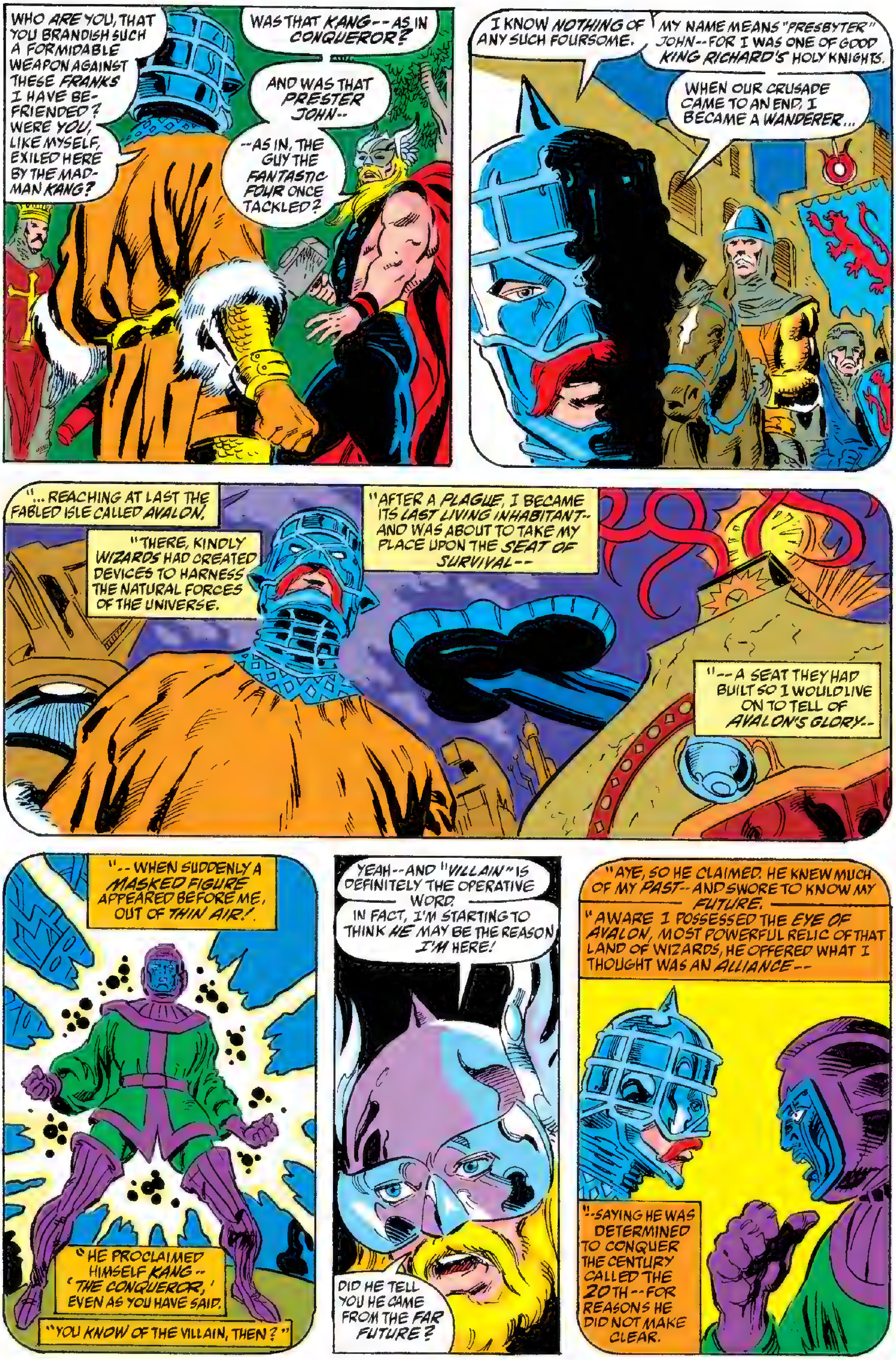

--AND I'M SICK AND TIRED OF BEING EVERYONE'S IDEA OF A PIN CUSHION!
I'M THOR, FOR PETE'S SAKE-- AND IT'S ABOUT TIME I STARTED ACTING THE PART!
ALL RIGHT, YOU TURKEYS--
--ALL I WANT OUT OF YOU IS A LITTLE INFORMATION, AND I'LL BE ON MY WAY!
<HE'S A DEVIL SENT BY THE FRANKS!>
<KILL HIM!>
I'M AN IDIOT!
WHAT IN BLAZES MADE ME THINK I WAS GOING TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND A WORD THESE CLOWNS SAID?
MAYBE I'D BETTER SPEAK A LANGUAGE THEY UNDERSTAND...
KRAKOOM
NOW THAT'S WHAT I LIKE, GUYS--
A LITTLE RESPECT.

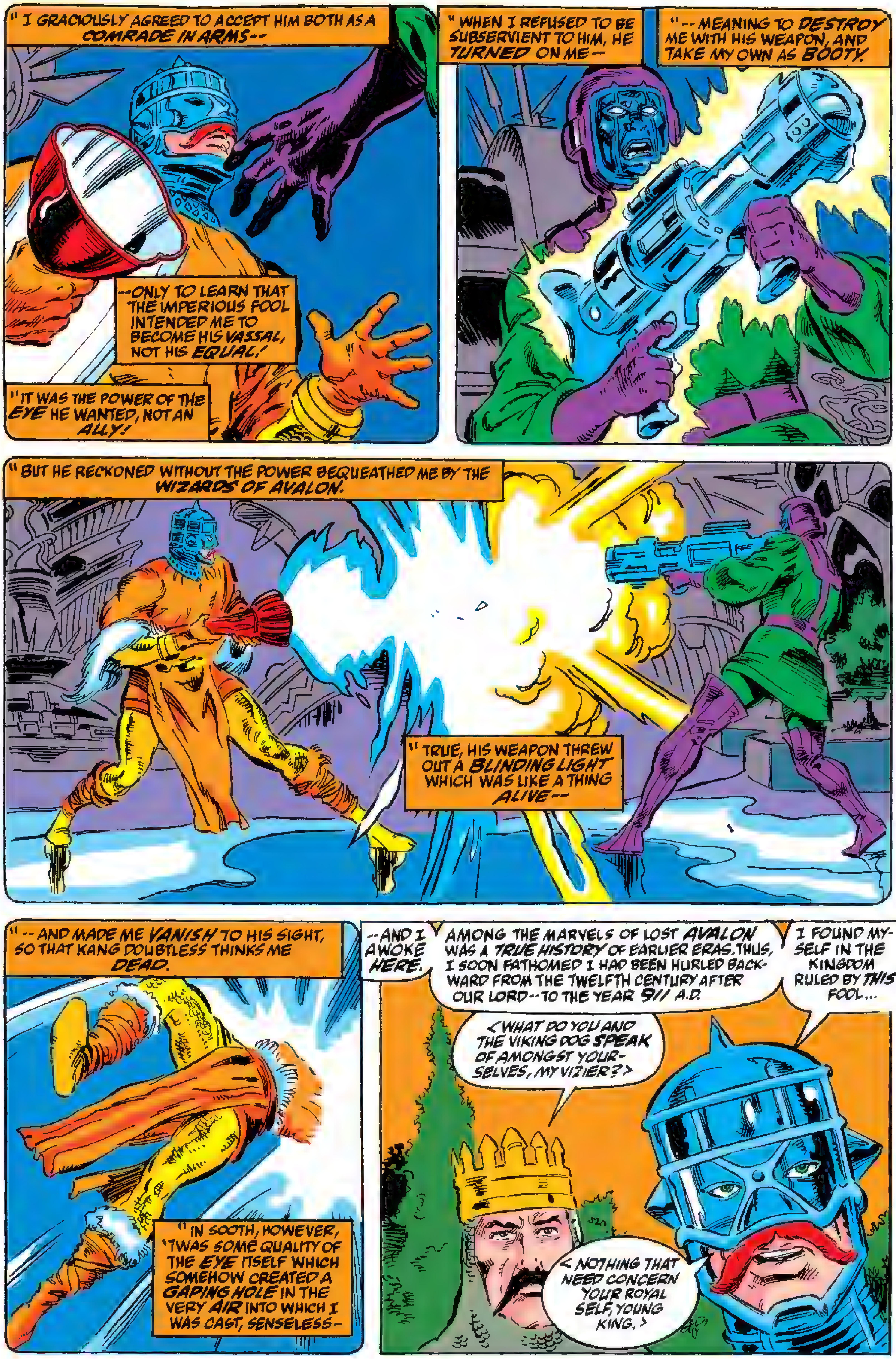

AND NOW, FOR MY *NEXT* MIRACLE...
THUMP THUMP
LET THERE BE *RAIN*.
YOU WERE EXPECTING MAYBE *PENNIES FROM HEAVEN*?
WELL...NO SENSE RUSTING MY MASK.
THUMP THUMP THUMP
HAVE I MADE MY *POINT*?
DON'T MESS WITH ANYBODY NAMED *THOR*!
HUH...?

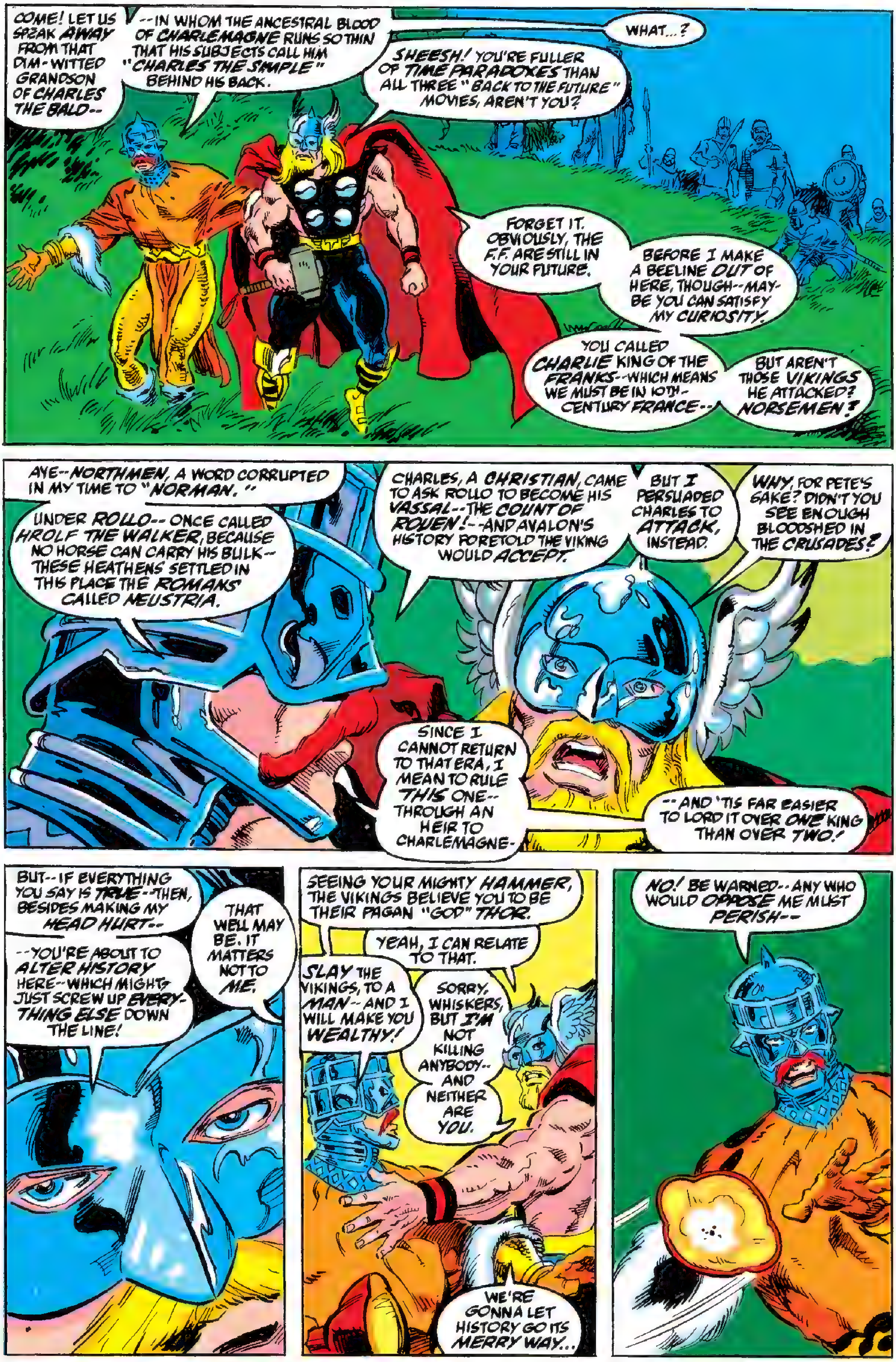

WELL, I'LL BE A--
YOU KNOW, I'M STARTING TO THINK YOU BOYS MUST BE A BUNCH OF VINTAGE VIKINGS.
BUT SHOULDN'T YOU ALL BE WEARING HORNED HELMETS OR SOMETHING?
IT'S REAL NICE BEING APPRECIATED, GUYS, BUT I'VE REALLY GOT TO--
WELL, NOW! THIS MUST BE THE VIKINGS' KING--OR AT LEAST A DUKE OR WHATEVER.
BIG SONUVAGUN!
<I AM ROLLO-- ONCE KNOWN AS HROLF THE WALKER.>
SORRY, PAL. WANT TO SCALE THAT DOWN A BIT?
I'LL TRY AND SET A GOOD EXAMPLE.
UH... THOR!
ROLLO!
AH! NOW WE'RE FINALLY GETTING SOMEWHERE...
<CHARGE, FRANKS-- FOR THE GLORY OF YOUNG KING CHARLES!>
...BUT SO'S THE OTHER SIDE!
YOU DIDN'T FORGET YOU WERE FIGHTING A BATTLE, HERE, DID YOU?
<WHAT GLORY CAN THERE BE TO FIGHT FOR CHARLES THE SIMPLE?>
<STILL, CHARGE WE SHALL!>

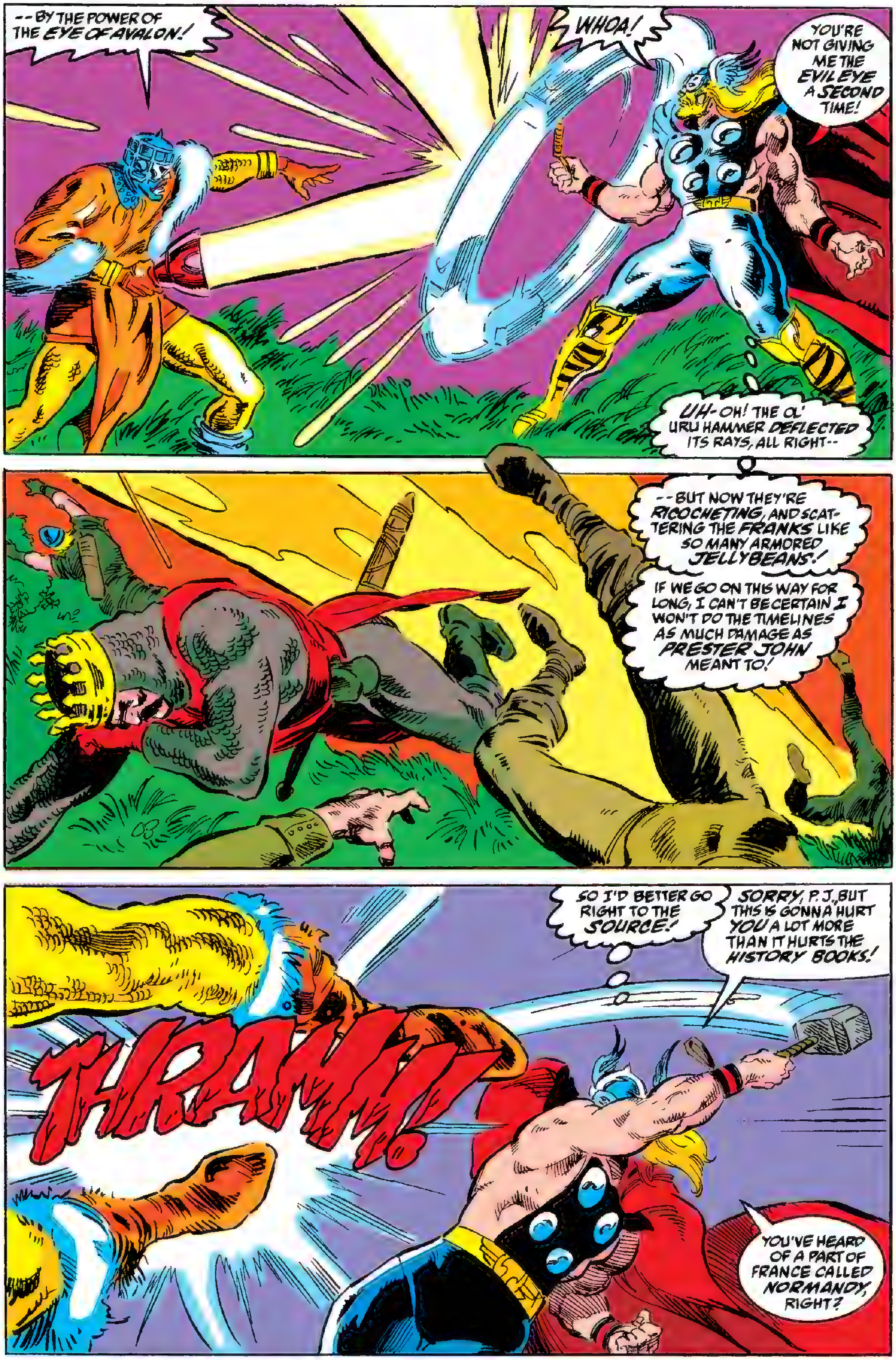

THIS IS WHERE I *CAME IN!*
I STILL DON'T KNOW *WHO'S* FIGHTING *WHO* HERE--
--AND FRANKLY, I DON'T MUCH CARE.
I THINK I'LL CALL DOWN SOME *LIGHTNING* THIS TIME, AND GIVE THEM A *REAL* SHOCK...
SHABOWW!
AGGGHK--!

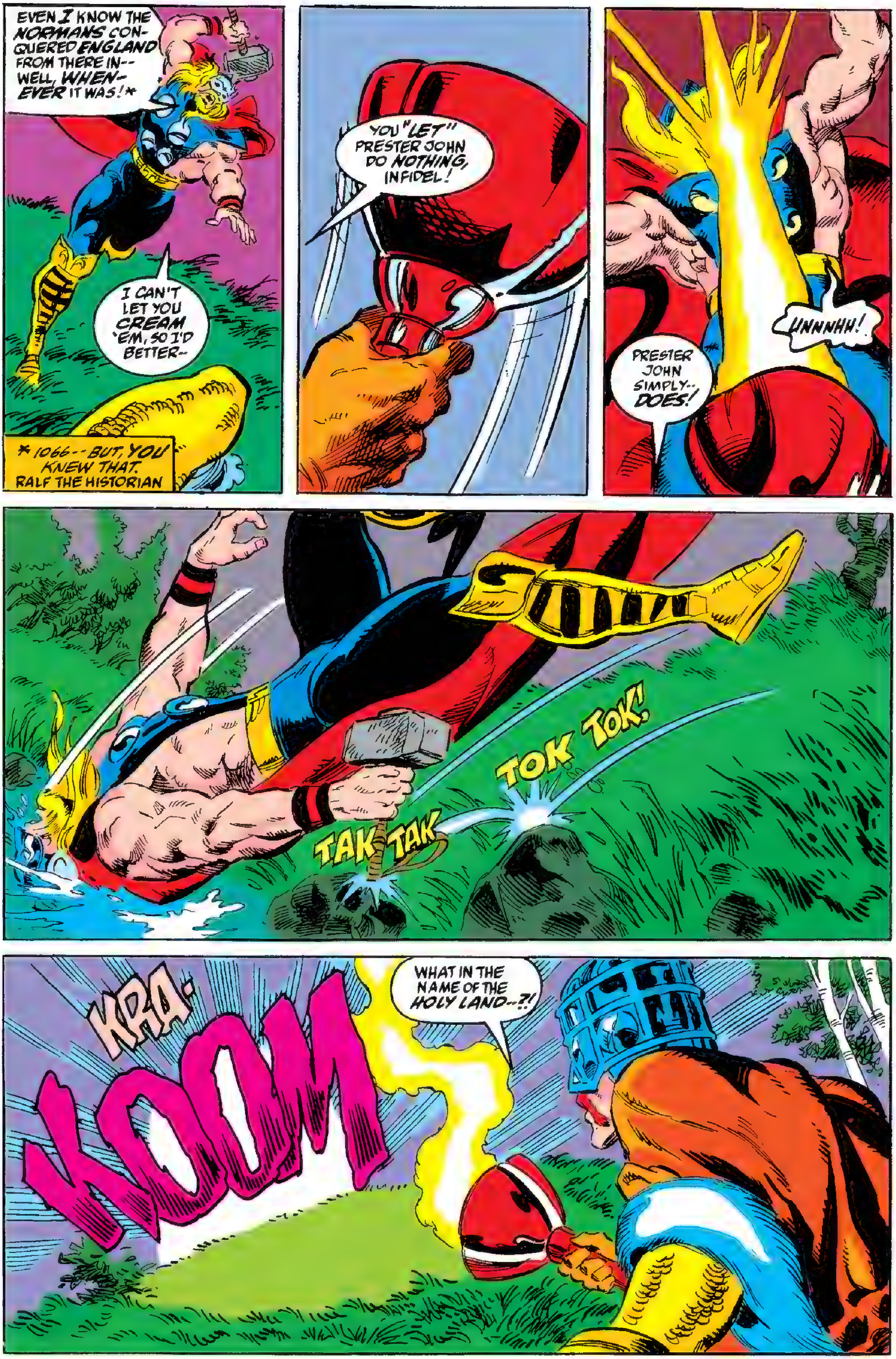

<YOU ARE OUR PRISONER, DEMON!>
DON'T TELL ME-- YOU'RE THE HOME TEAM'S CAPTAIN, RIGHT?
KIND OF AN ANEMIC-LOOKING SPECIMEN, AREN'T YOU?
IF I'D SPENT LESS TIME DAYDREAMING IN MRS. WAGNER'S HISTORY CLASS, MAYBE I'D KNOW WHO YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE.
OR IF THIS IS JUST SOME NEVER-NEVER-LAND, THAT ONLY LOOKS LIKE MEDIEVAL EUROPE?
WHAT I REALLY WANT TO KNOW, THOUGH, IS--
-- WHAT'VE YOU GOT UP YOUR SLEEVE THAT KNOCKED ME FLAT ON MY BUTT?
IT WAS NOT CHARLES THE SIMPLE WHO FELLED YOU, WARRIOR--
IT WAS PRESTER JOHN--
AND THE -- EYE OF AVALON!
?

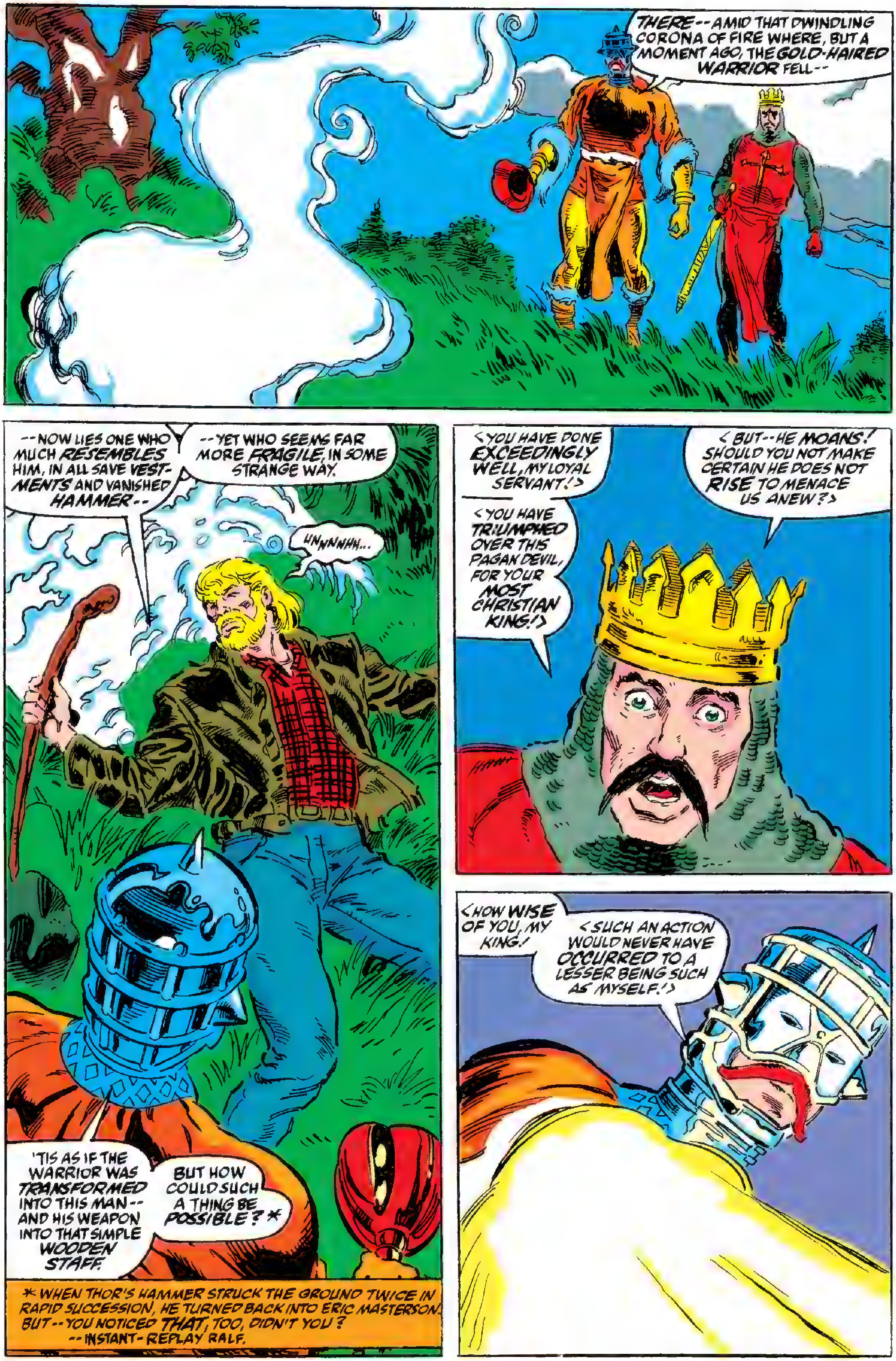

WHO ARE YOU, THAT YOU BRANDISH SUCH A FORMIDABLE WEAPON AGAINST THESE FRANKS I HAVE BEFRIENDED? WERE YOU, LIKE MYSELF, EXILED HERE BY THE MADMAN KANG?
WAS THAT KANG--AS IN CONQUEROR?
AND WAS THAT PRESTER JOHN--
--AS IN, THE GUY THE FANTASTIC FOUR ONCE TACKLED?
I KNOW NOTHING OF ANY SUCH FOURSOME.
MY NAME MEANS "PRESBYTER" JOHN--FOR I WAS ONE OF GOOD KING RICHARD'S HOLY KNIGHTS.
WHEN OUR CRUSADE CAME TO AN END, I BECAME A WANDERER...
"...REACHING AT LAST THE FABLED ISLE CALLED AVALON.
"THERE, KINDLY WIZARDS HAD CREATED DEVICES TO HARNESS THE NATURAL FORCES OF THE UNIVERSE.
"AFTER A PLAGUE, I BECAME ITS LAST LIVING INHABITANT--AND WAS ABOUT TO TAKE MY PLACE UPON THE SEAT OF SURVIVAL--
"--A SEAT THEY HAD BUILT SO I WOULD LIVE ON TO TELL OF AVALON'S GLORY--
"--WHEN SUDDENLY A MASKED FIGURE APPEARED BEFORE ME, OUT OF THIN AIR!
"HE PROCLAIMED HIMSELF KANG--'THE CONQUEROR,' EVEN AS YOU HAVE SAID.
"YOU KNOW OF THE VILLAIN, THEN?"
YEAH--AND "VILLAIN" IS DEFINITELY THE OPERATIVE WORD.
IN FACT, I'M STARTING TO THINK HE MAY BE THE REASON I'M HERE!
DID HE TELL YOU HE CAME FROM THE FAR FUTURE?
"AYE, SO HE CLAIMED. HE KNEW MUCH OF MY PAST--AND SWORE TO KNOW MY FUTURE.
"AWARE I POSSESSED THE EYE OF AVALON, MOST POWERFUL RELIC OF THAT LAND OF WIZARDS, HE OFFERED WHAT I THOUGHT WAS AN ALLIANCE--
"--SAYING HE WAS DETERMINED TO CONQUER THE CENTURY CALLED THE 20TH--FOR REASONS HE DID NOT MAKE CLEAR.

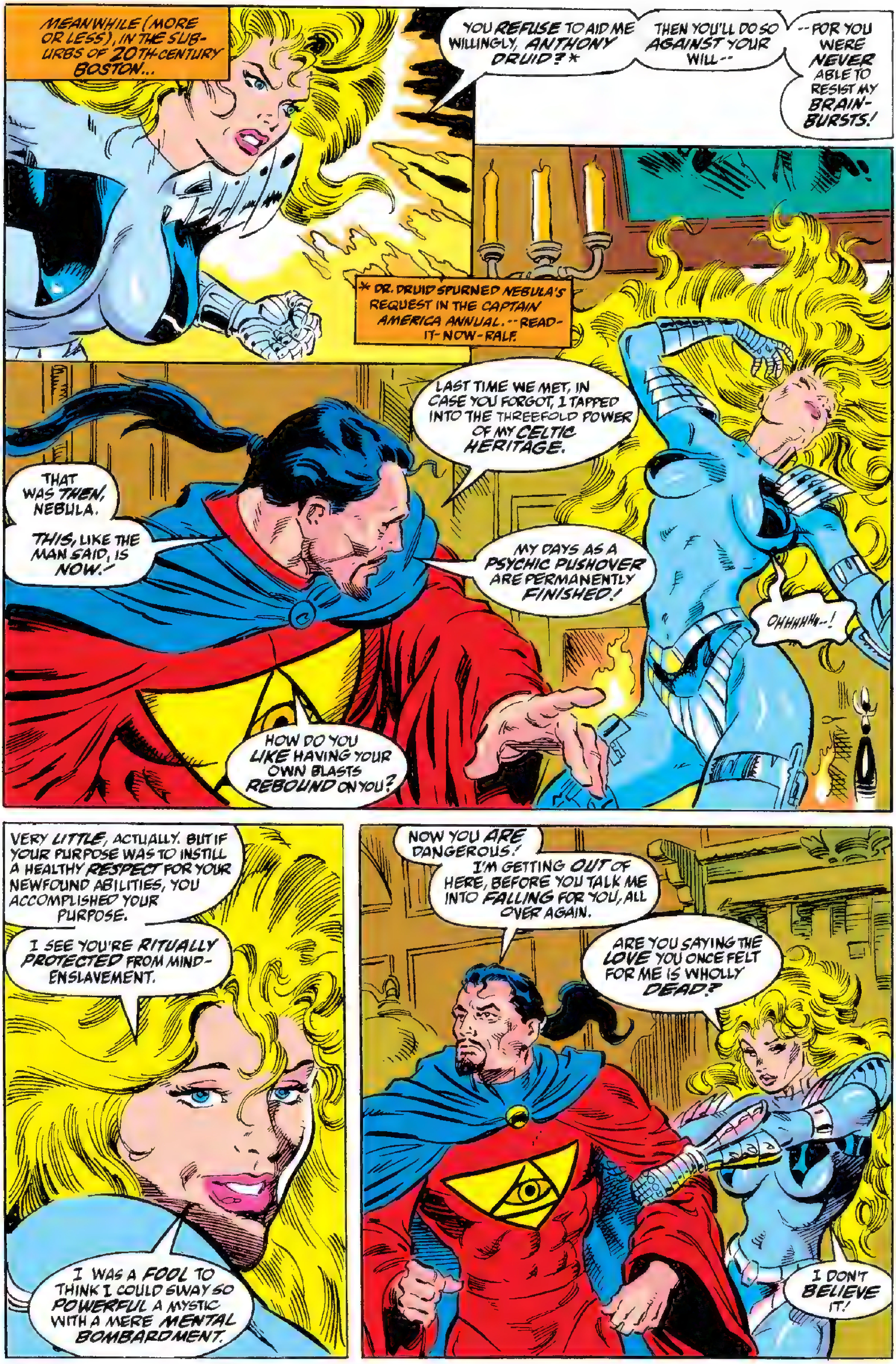

"I GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO ACCEPT HIM BOTH AS A *COMRADE IN ARMS*--
--ONLY TO LEARN THAT THE IMPERIOUS FOOL INTENDED ME TO BECOME HIS *VASSAL*, NOT HIS *EQUAL!*
"IT WAS THE POWER OF THE *EYE* HE WANTED, NOT AN *ALLY!*
"WHEN I REFUSED TO BE SUBSERVIENT TO HIM, HE *TURNED* ON ME--
"--MEANING TO *DESTROY* ME WITH HIS WEAPON, AND TAKE MY OWN AS *BOOTY.*
"BUT HE RECKONED WITHOUT THE POWER BEQUEATHED ME BY THE *WIZARDS OF AVALON.*
"TRUE, HIS WEAPON THREW OUT A *BLINDING LIGHT* WHICH WAS LIKE A THING *ALIVE*--
"--AND MADE ME *VANISH* TO HIS SIGHT, SO THAT KANG DOUBTLESS THINKS ME *DEAD.*
"IN SOOTH, HOWEVER, 'TWAS SOME QUALITY OF THE *EYE* ITSELF WHICH SOMEHOW CREATED A *GAPING HOLE* IN THE VERY *AIR* INTO WHICH I WAS CAST, SENSELESS--
--AND I AWOKE *HERE.*
AMONG THE MARVELS OF LOST *AVALON* WAS A *TRUE HISTORY* OF EARLIER ERAS. THUS, I SOON FATHOMED I HAD BEEN HURLED BACKWARD FROM THE TWELFTH CENTURY AFTER OUR LORD--TO THE YEAR *911* A.D.
I FOUND MYSELF IN THE KINGDOM RULED BY *THIS* FOOL...
<WHAT DO YOU AND THE VIKING DOG *SPEAK* OF AMONGST YOURSELVES, MY VIZIER?>
<NOTHING THAT NEED CONCERN YOUR ROYAL SELF, YOUNG KING.>

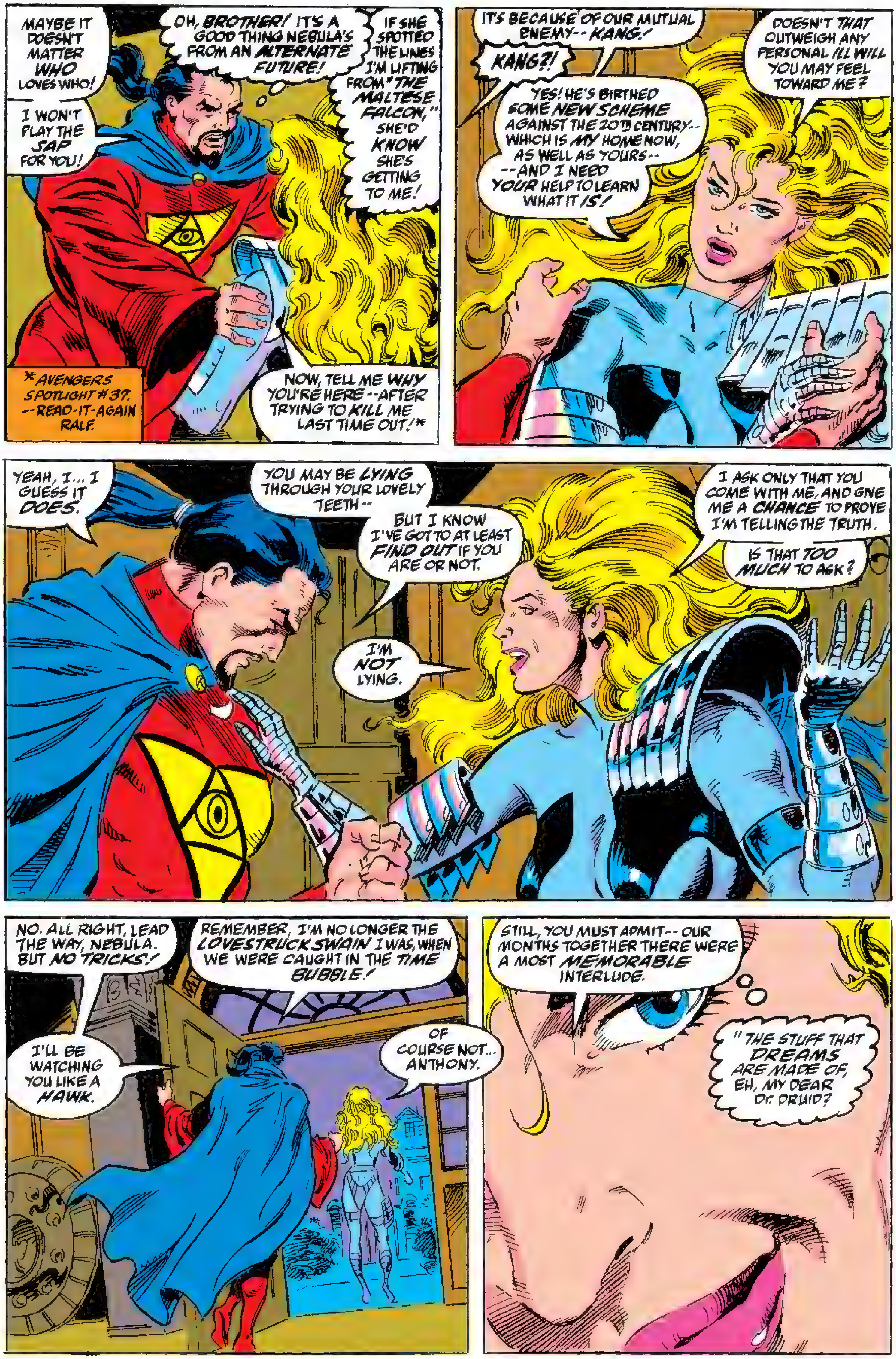

COME! LET US SPEAK AWAY FROM THAT DIM-WITTED GRANDSON OF CHARLES THE BALD--
--IN WHOM THE ANCESTRAL BLOOD OF CHARLEMAGNE RUNS SO THIN THAT HIS SUBJECTS CALL HIM "CHARLES THE SIMPLE" BEHIND HIS BACK.
WHAT...?
SHEESH! YOU'RE FULLER OF TIME PARADOXES THAN ALL THREE "BACK TO THE FUTURE" MOVIES, AREN'T YOU?
FORGET IT. OBVIOUSLY, THE F.F. ARE STILL IN YOUR FUTURE.
BEFORE I MAKE A BEELINE OUT OF HERE, THOUGH--MAYBE YOU CAN SATISFY MY CURIOSITY.
YOU CALLED CHARLIE KING OF THE FRANKS--WHICH MEANS WE MUST BE IN 10TH-CENTURY FRANCE--
BUT AREN'T THOSE VIKINGS HE ATTACKED? NORSEMEN?
AYE--NORTHMEN, A WORD CORRUPTED IN MY TIME TO "NORMAN."
UNDER ROLLO--ONCE CALLED HROLF THE WALKER, BECAUSE NO HORSE CAN CARRY HIS BULK--THESE HEATHENS SETTLED IN THIS PLACE THE ROMANS' CALLED NEUSTRIA.
CHARLES, A CHRISTIAN, CAME TO ASK ROLLO TO BECOME HIS VASSAL--THE COUNT OF ROUEN!--AND AVALON'S HISTORY FORETOLD THE VIKING WOULD ACCEPT.
BUT I PERSUADED CHARLES TO ATTACK, INSTEAD.
WHY, FOR PETE'S SAKE? DIDN'T YOU SEE ENOUGH BLOODSHED IN THE CRUSADES?
SINCE I CANNOT RETURN TO THAT ERA, I MEAN TO RULE THIS ONE--THROUGH AN HEIR TO CHARLEMAGNE-
--AND 'TIS FAR EASIER TO LORD IT OVER ONE KING THAN OVER TWO!
BUT--IF EVERYTHING YOU SAY IS TRUE--THEN, BESIDES MAKING MY HEAD HURT--
--YOU'RE ABOUT TO ALTER HISTORY HERE--WHICH MIGHT JUST SCREW UP EVERYTHING ELSE DOWN THE LINE!
THAT WELL MAY BE. IT MATTERS NOT TO ME.
SEEING YOUR MIGHTY HAMMER, THE VIKINGS BELIEVE YOU TO BE THEIR PAGAN "GOD" THOR.
YEAH, I CAN RELATE TO THAT.
SLAY THE VIKINGS, TO A MAN--AND I WILL MAKE YOU WEALTHY!
SORRY, WHISKERS, BUT I'M NOT KILLING ANYBODY--AND NEITHER ARE YOU.
WE'RE GONNA LET HISTORY GO ITS MERRY WAY...
NO! BE WARNED--ANY WHO WOULD OPPOSE ME MUST PERISH--

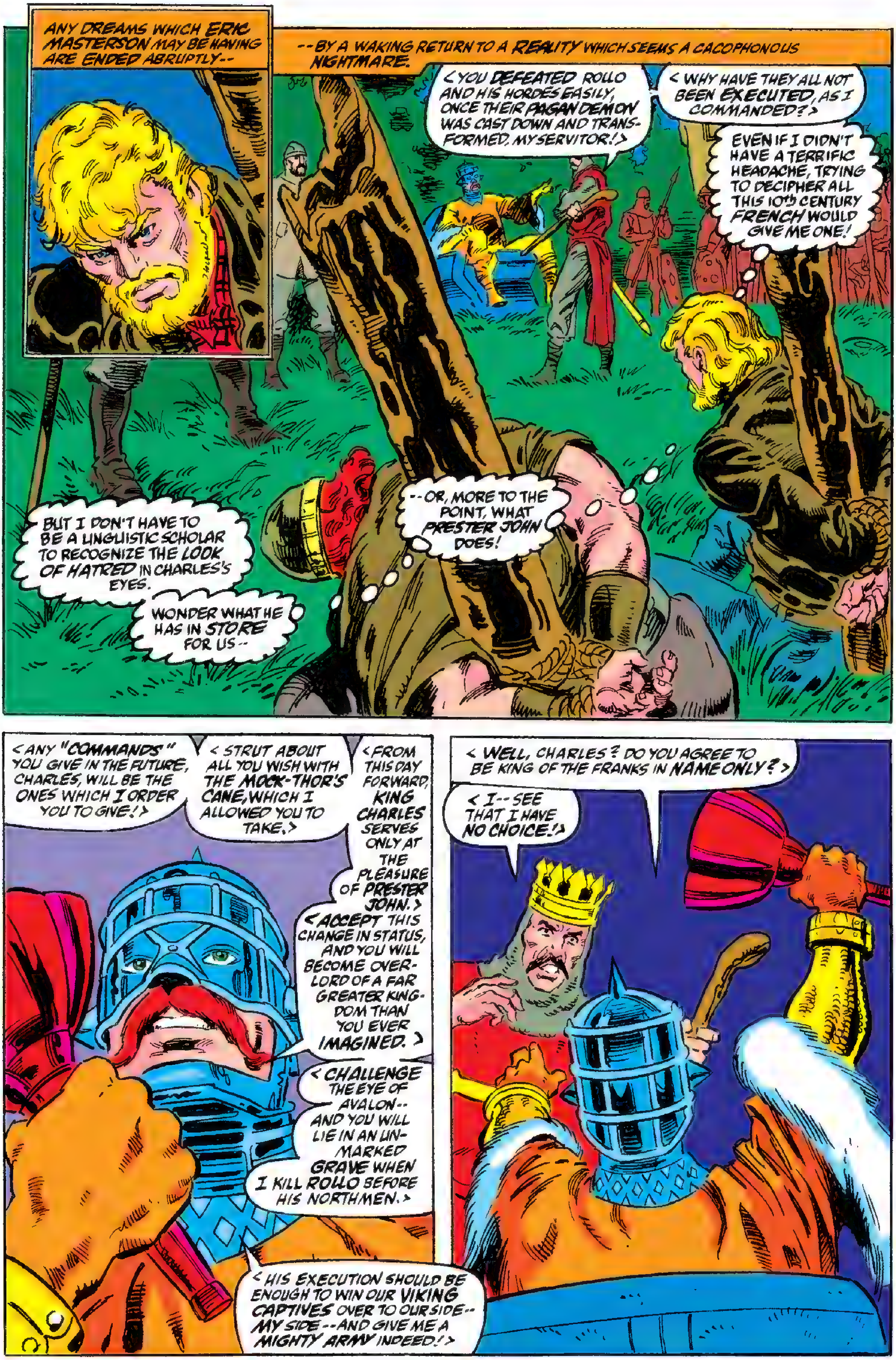

--BY THE POWER OF THE EYE OF AVALON!
WHOA!
YOU'RE NOT GIVING ME THE EVIL EYE A SECOND TIME!
UH-OH! THE OL' URU HAMMER DEFLECTED ITS RAYS, ALL RIGHT--
--BUT NOW THEY'RE RICOCHETING, AND SCATTERING THE FRANKS LIKE SO MANY ARMORED JELLYBEANS!
IF WE GO ON THIS WAY FOR LONG, I CAN'T BE CERTAIN I WON'T DO THE TIMELINES AS MUCH DAMAGE AS PRESTER JOHN MEANT TO!
SO I'D BETTER GO RIGHT TO THE SOURCE!
SORRY, P. J., BUT THIS IS GONNA HURT YOU A LOT MORE THAN IT HURTS THE HISTORY BOOKS!
THRAMM!
YOU'VE HEARD OF A PART OF FRANCE CALLED NORMANDY, RIGHT?

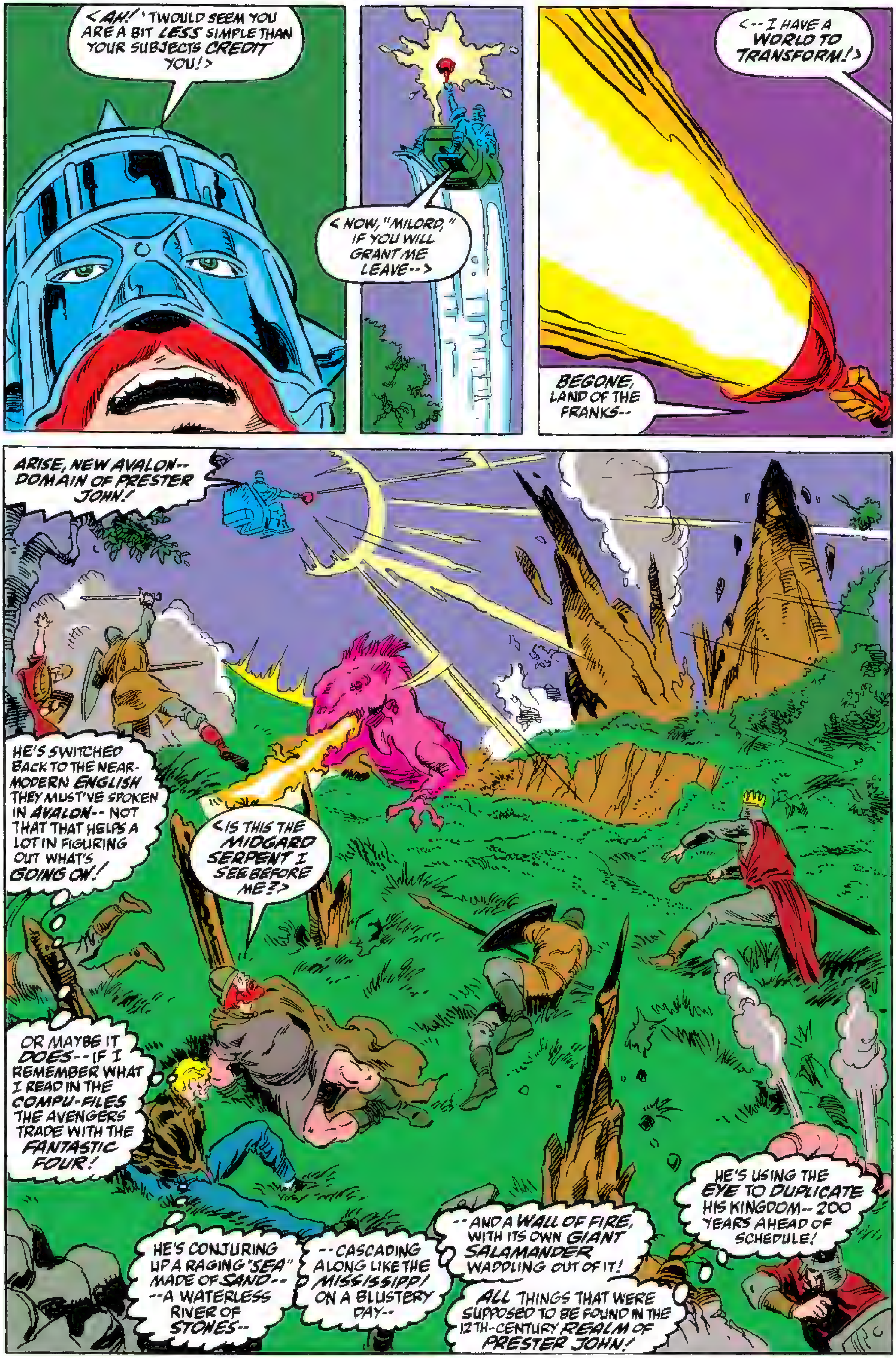

EVEN I KNOW THE NORMANS CONQUERED ENGLAND FROM THERE IN-- WELL, WHENEVER IT WAS! *
I CAN'T LET YOU CREAM 'EM, SO I'D BETTER--
* 1066-- BUT, YOU KNEW THAT. RALF THE HISTORIAN
YOU "LET" PRESTER JOHN DO NOTHING, INFIDEL!
UNNNHH!
PRESTER JOHN SIMPLY.. DOES!
TOK TOK!
TAK TAK
KRA-KOOM
WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE HOLY LAND--?!

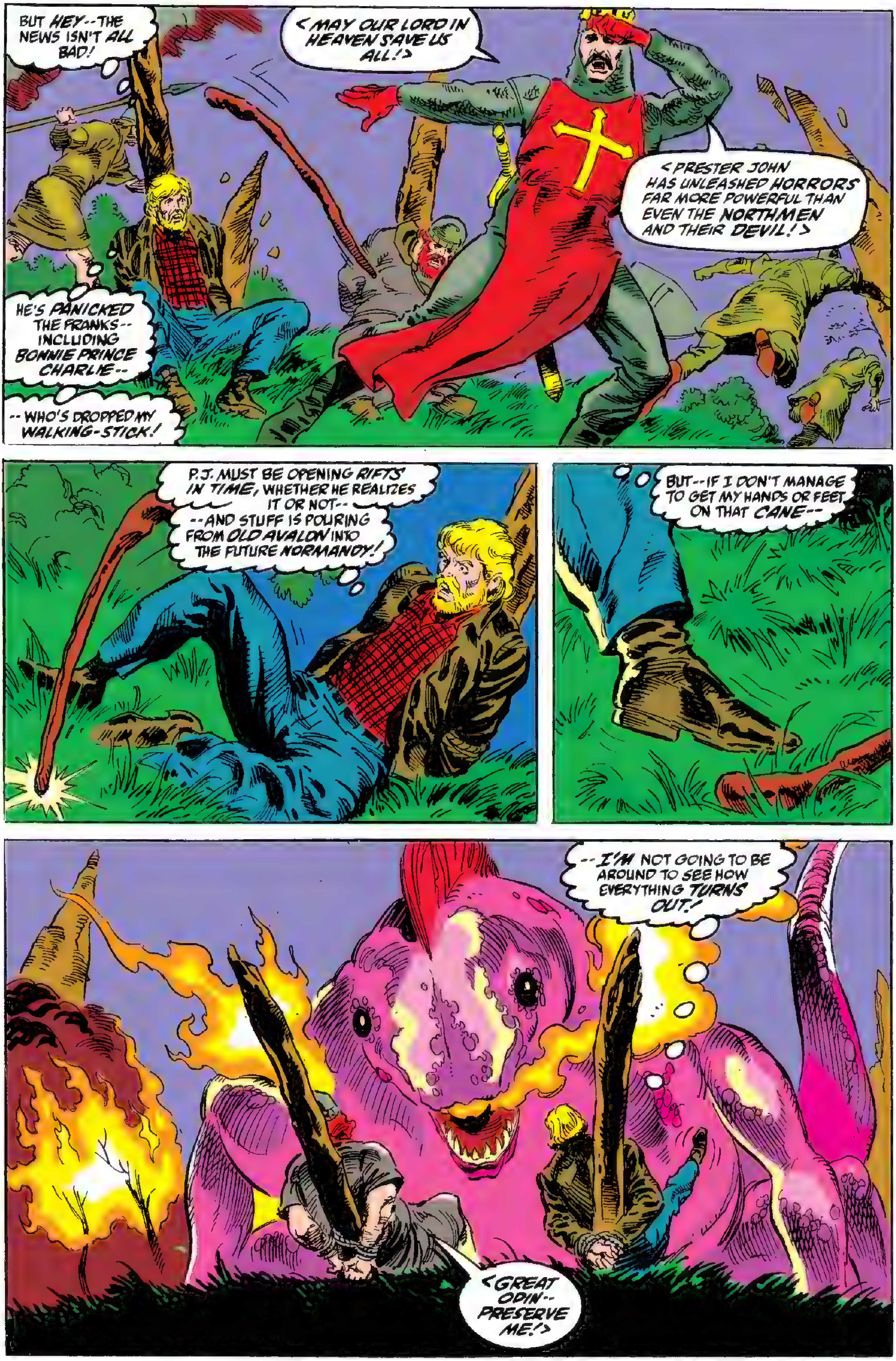

THERE--AMID THAT DWINDLING CORONA OF FIRE WHERE, BUT A MOMENT AGO, THE GOLD-HAIRED WARRIOR FELL--
--NOW LIES ONE WHO MUCH RESEMBLES HIM, IN ALL SAVE VESTMENTS AND VANISHED HAMMER--
--YET WHO SEEMS FAR MORE FRAGILE, IN SOME STRANGE WAY.
UNNNNHH...
'TIS AS IF THE WARRIOR WAS TRANSFORMED INTO THIS MAN--AND HIS WEAPON INTO THAT SIMPLE WOODEN STAFF.
BUT HOW COULD SUCH A THING BE POSSIBLE? *
* WHEN THOR'S HAMMER STRUCK THE GROUND TWICE IN RAPID SUCCESSION, HE TURNED BACK INTO ERIC MASTERSON. BUT--YOU NOTICED THAT, TOO, DIDN'T YOU? --INSTANT-REPLAY RALF.
<YOU HAVE DONE EXCEEDINGLY WELL, MY LOYAL SERVANT!>
<YOU HAVE TRIUMPHED OVER THIS PAGAN DEVIL, FOR YOUR MOST CHRISTIAN KING!>
<BUT--HE MOANS! SHOULD YOU NOT MAKE CERTAIN HE DOES NOT RISE TO MENACE US ANEW?>
<HOW WISE OF YOU, MY KING!
<SUCH AN ACTION WOULD NEVER HAVE OCCURRED TO A LESSER BEING SUCH AS MYSELF!>

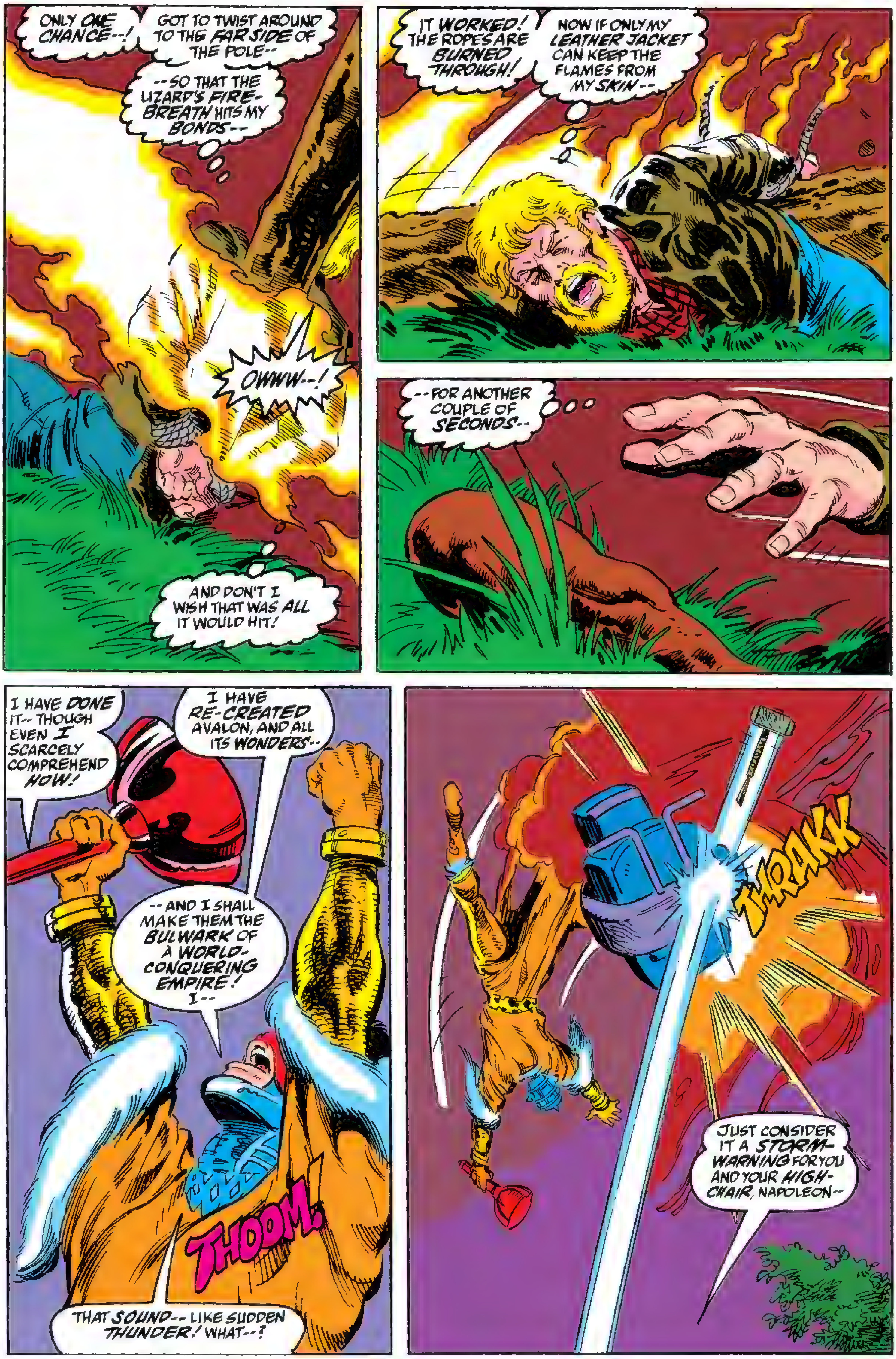

MEANWHILE (MORE OR LESS), IN THE SUBURBS OF 20TH-CENTURY BOSTON...
YOU REFUSE TO AID ME WILLINGLY, ANTHONY DRUID?*
THEN YOU'LL DO SO AGAINST YOUR WILL--
--FOR YOU WERE NEVER ABLE TO RESIST MY BRAIN-BURSTS!
* DR. DRUID SPURNED NEBULA'S REQUEST IN THE CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL. --READ-IT-NOW-RALF.
LAST TIME WE MET, IN CASE YOU FORGOT, I TAPPED INTO THE THREEFOLD POWER OF MY CELTIC HERITAGE.
THAT WAS THEN, NEBULA.
THIS, LIKE THE MAN SAID, IS NOW!
MY DAYS AS A PSYCHIC PUSHOVER ARE PERMANENTLY FINISHED!
HOW DO YOU LIKE HAVING YOUR OWN BLASTS REBOUND ON YOU?
OHHHHH--!
VERY LITTLE, ACTUALLY. BUT IF YOUR PURPOSE WAS TO INSTILL A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR YOUR NEWFOUND ABILITIES, YOU ACCOMPLISHED YOUR PURPOSE.
I SEE YOU'RE RITUALLY PROTECTED FROM MIND-ENSLAVEMENT.
I WAS A FOOL TO THINK I COULD SWAY SO POWERFUL A MYSTIC WITH A MERE MENTAL BOMBARDMENT.
NOW YOU ARE DANGEROUS!
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE, BEFORE YOU TALK ME INTO FALLING FOR YOU, ALL OVER AGAIN.
ARE YOU SAYING THE LOVE YOU ONCE FELT FOR ME IS WHOLLY DEAD?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

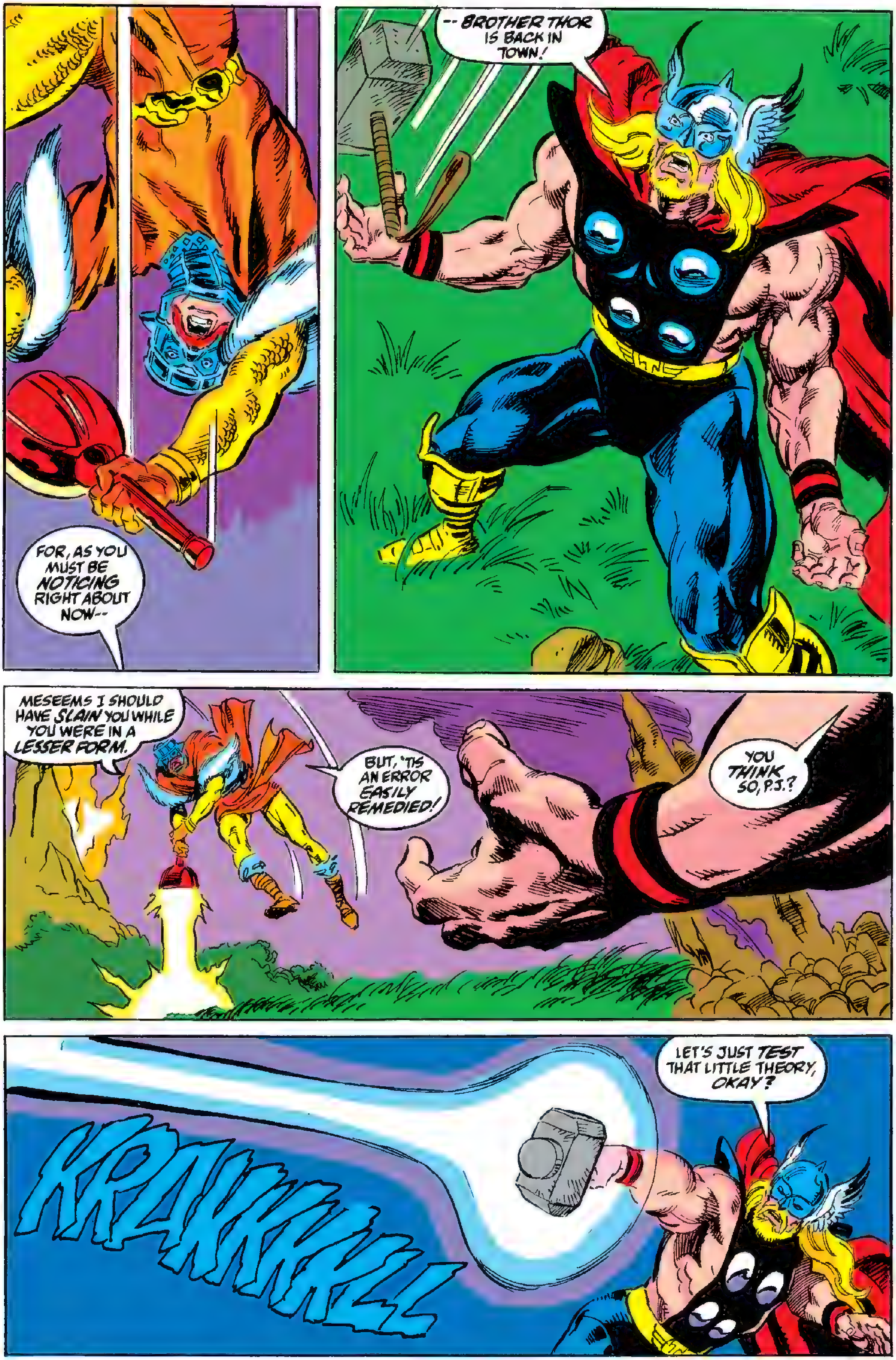

MAYBE IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO LOVES WHO!
OH, BROTHER! IT'S A GOOD THING NEBULA'S FROM AN ALTERNATE FUTURE!
IF SHE SPOTTED THE LINES I'M LIFTING FROM "THE MALTESE FALCON," SHE'D KNOW SHE'S GETTING TO ME!
I WON'T PLAY THE SAP FOR YOU!
*AVENGERS SPOTLIGHT #37. --READ-IT-AGAIN RALF.
NOW, TELL ME WHY YOU'RE HERE --AFTER TRYING TO KILL ME LAST TIME OUT!*
IT'S BECAUSE OF OUR MUTUAL ENEMY-- KANG!
KANG?!
YES! HE'S BIRTHED SOME NEW SCHEME AGAINST THE 20TH CENTURY-- WHICH IS MY HOME NOW, AS WELL AS YOURS-- --AND I NEED YOUR HELP TO LEARN WHAT IT IS!
DOESN'T THAT OUTWEIGH ANY PERSONAL ILL WILL YOU MAY FEEL TOWARD ME?
YEAH, I... I GUESS IT DOES.
YOU MAY BE LYING THROUGH YOUR LOVELY TEETH--
BUT I KNOW I'VE GOT TO AT LEAST FIND OUT IF YOU ARE OR NOT.
I'M NOT LYING.
I ASK ONLY THAT YOU COME WITH ME, AND GIVE ME A CHANCE TO PROVE I'M TELLING THE TRUTH.
IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?
NO. ALL RIGHT, LEAD THE WAY, NEBULA. BUT NO TRICKS!
REMEMBER, I'M NO LONGER THE LOVESTRUCK SWAIN I WAS, WHEN WE WERE CAUGHT IN THE TIME BUBBLE!
I'LL BE WATCHING YOU LIKE A HAWK.
OF COURSE NOT... ANTHONY.
STILL, YOU MUST ADMIT-- OUR MONTHS TOGETHER THERE WERE A MOST MEMORABLE INTERLUDE.
"THE STUFF THAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF," EH, MY DEAR DR. DRUID?

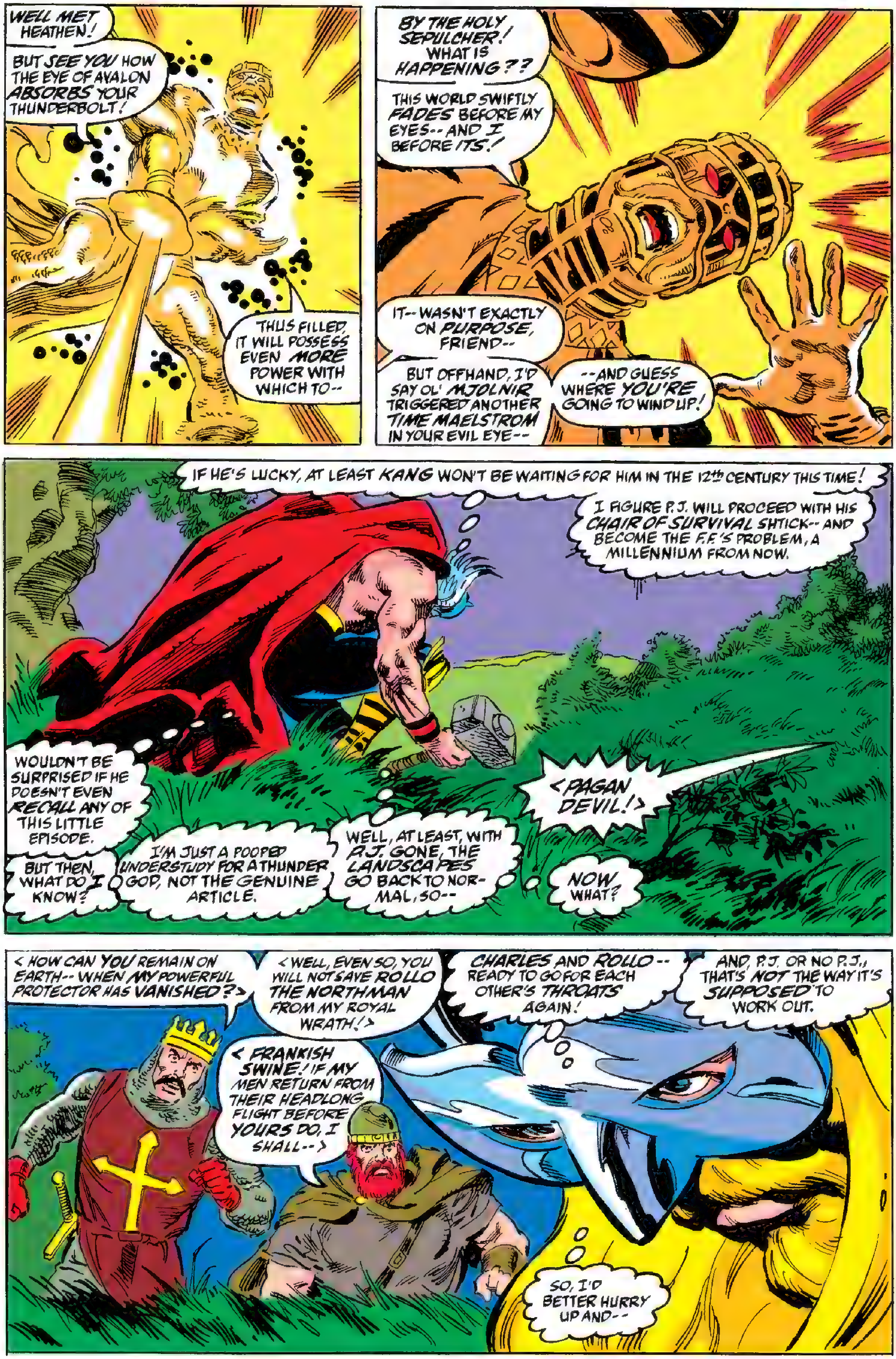

ANY DREAMS WHICH ERIC MASTERSON MAY BE HAVING ARE ENDED ABRUPTLY--
--BY A WAKING RETURN TO A REALITY WHICH SEEMS A CACOPHONOUS NIGHTMARE.
<YOU DEFEATED ROLLO AND HIS HORDES EASILY, ONCE THEIR PAGAN DEMON WAS CAST DOWN AND TRANSFORMED, MY SERVITOR!>
<WHY HAVE THEY ALL NOT BEEN EXECUTED, AS I COMMANDED?>
EVEN IF I DIDN'T HAVE A TERRIFIC HEADACHE, TRYING TO DECIPHER ALL THIS 10th CENTURY FRENCH WOULD GIVE ME ONE!
BUT I DON'T HAVE TO BE A LINGUISTIC SCHOLAR TO RECOGNIZE THE LOOK OF HATRED IN CHARLES'S EYES.
WONDER WHAT HE HAS IN STORE FOR US--
--OR, MORE TO THE POINT, WHAT PRESTER JOHN DOES!
<ANY "COMMANDS" YOU GIVE IN THE FUTURE, CHARLES, WILL BE THE ONES WHICH I ORDER YOU TO GIVE!>
<STRUT ABOUT ALL YOU WISH WITH THE MOCK-THOR'S CANE, WHICH I ALLOWED YOU TO TAKE.>
<FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, KING CHARLES SERVES ONLY AT THE PLEASURE OF PRESTER JOHN.>
<ACCEPT THIS CHANGE IN STATUS, AND YOU WILL BECOME OVERLORD OF A FAR GREATER KINGDOM THAN YOU EVER IMAGINED.>
<CHALLENGE THE EYE OF AVALON-- AND YOU WILL LIE IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE WHEN I KILL ROLLO BEFORE HIS NORTHMEN.>
<HIS EXECUTION SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO WIN OUR VIKING CAPTIVES OVER TO OUR SIDE-- MY SIDE--AND GIVE ME A MIGHTY ARMY INDEED!>
<WELL, CHARLES? DO YOU AGREE TO BE KING OF THE FRANKS IN NAME ONLY?>
<I-- SEE THAT I HAVE NO CHOICE!>

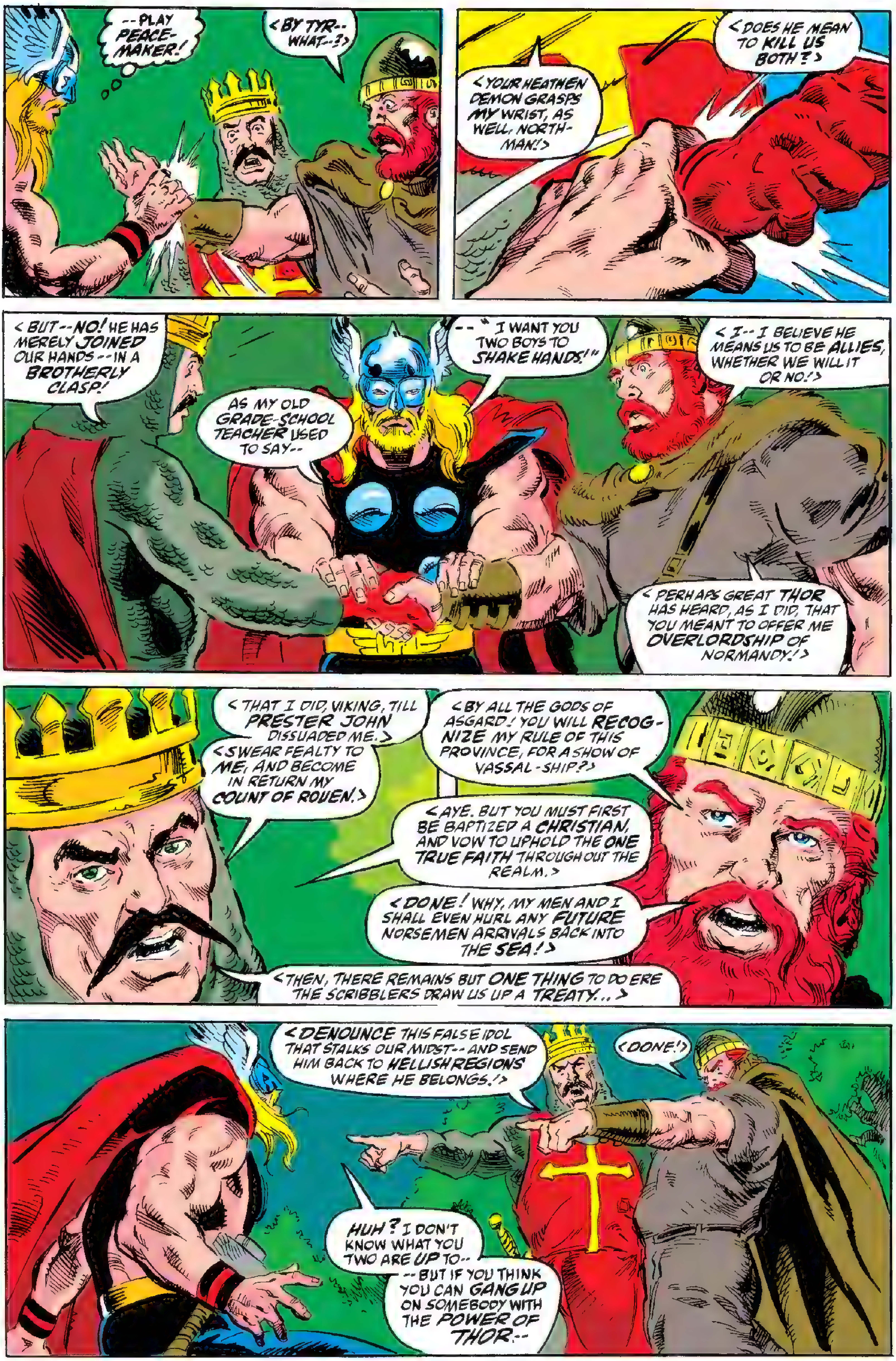

<AH! 'TWOULD SEEM YOU ARE A BIT LESS SIMPLE THAN YOUR SUBJECTS CREDIT YOU!>
< NOW, "MILORD," IF YOU WILL GRANT ME LEAVE-->
<--I HAVE A WORLD TO TRANSFORM!>
BEGONE, LAND OF THE FRANKS--
ARISE, NEW AVALON-- DOMAIN OF PRESTER JOHN!
HE'S SWITCHED BACK TO THE NEAR-MODERN ENGLISH THEY MUST'VE SPOKEN IN AVALON-- NOT THAT THAT HELPS A LOT IN FIGURING OUT WHAT'S GOING ON!
<IS THIS THE MIDGARD SERPENT I SEE BEFORE ME?>
OR MAYBE IT DOES-- IF I REMEMBER WHAT I READ IN THE COMPU-FILES THE AVENGERS TRADE WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
HE'S USING THE EYE TO DUPLICATE HIS KINGDOM-- 200 YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE!
HE'S CONJURING UP A RAGING "SEA" MADE OF SAND-- --A WATERLESS RIVER OF STONES--
--CASCADING ALONG LIKE THE MISSISSIPPI ON A BLUSTERY DAY--
--AND A WALL OF FIRE, WITH ITS OWN GIANT SALAMANDER WADDLING OUT OF IT!
ALL THINGS THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND IN THE 12TH-CENTURY REALM OF PRESTER JOHN!

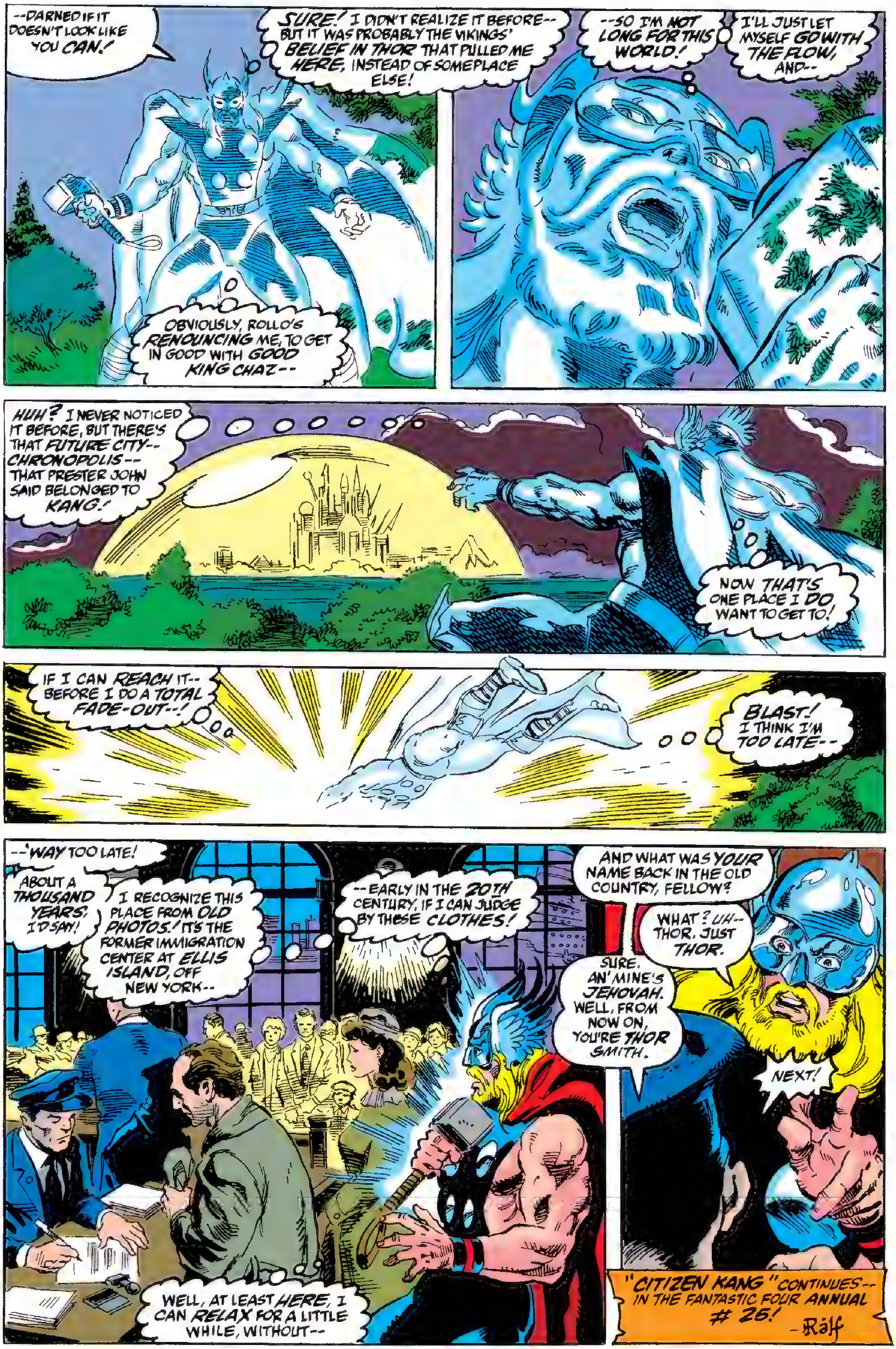

BUT HEY--THE NEWS ISN'T ALL BAD!
<MAY OUR LORD IN HEAVEN SAVE US ALL!>
<PRESTER JOHN HAS UNLEASHED HORRORS FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN EVEN THE NORTHMEN AND THEIR DEVIL!>
HE'S PANICKED THE FRANKS--INCLUDING BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE--
--WHO'S DROPPED MY WALKING-STICK!
P.J. MUST BE OPENING RIFTS IN TIME, WHETHER HE REALIZES IT OR NOT--
--AND STUFF IS POURING FROM OLD AVALON INTO THE FUTURE NORMANDY!
BUT--IF I DON'T MANAGE TO GET MY HANDS OR FEET ON THAT CANE--
--I'M NOT GOING TO BE AROUND TO SEE HOW EVERYTHING TURNS OUT!
<GREAT ODIN--PRESERVE ME!>

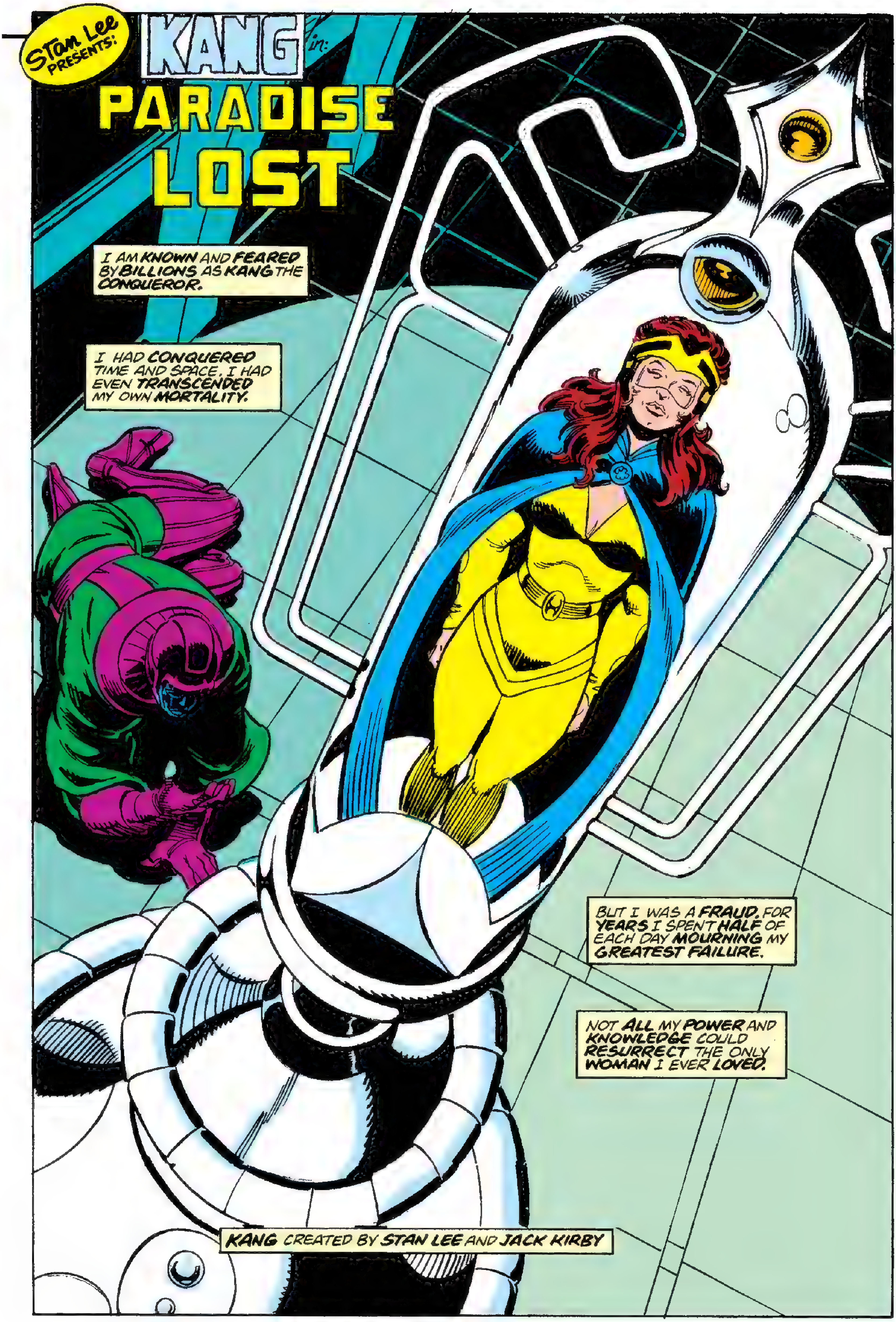

ONLY ONE CHANCE--!
GOT TO TWIST AROUND TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE POLE--
--SO THAT THE LIZARD'S FIRE-BREATH HITS MY BONDS--
OWWW--!
AND DON'T I WISH THAT WAS ALL IT WOULD HIT!
IT WORKED! THE ROPES ARE BURNED THROUGH!
NOW IF ONLY MY LEATHER JACKET CAN KEEP THE FLAMES FROM MY SKIN--
--FOR ANOTHER COUPLE OF SECONDS--
I HAVE DONE IT-- THOUGH EVEN I SCARCELY COMPREHEND HOW!
I HAVE RE-CREATED AVALON, AND ALL ITS WONDERS--
--AND I SHALL MAKE THEM THE BULWARK OF A WORLD-CONQUERING EMPIRE! I--
THOOM!
THAT SOUND-- LIKE SUDDEN THUNDER! WHAT--?
THRAKK
JUST CONSIDER IT A STORM-WARNING FOR YOU AND YOUR HIGH-CHAIR, NAPOLEON--

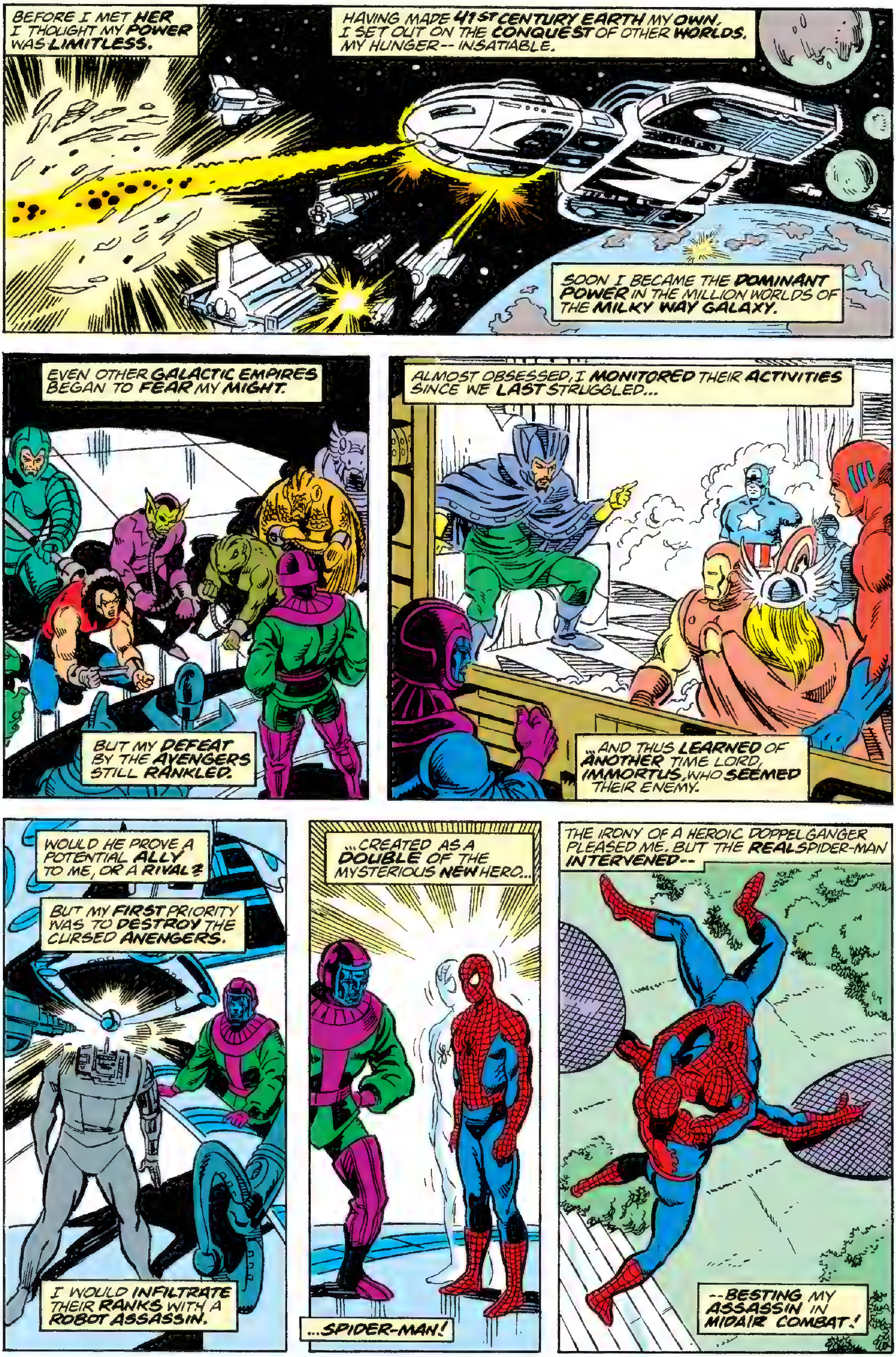

FOR, AS YOU MUST BE *NOTICING* RIGHT ABOUT NOW--
--*BROTHER THOR* IS BACK IN TOWN!
MESEEMS I SHOULD HAVE *SLAIN* YOU WHILE YOU WERE IN A *LESSER FORM.*
BUT, 'TIS AN ERROR *EASILY REMEDIED!*
YOU *THINK* SO, P.J.?
LET'S JUST *TEST* THAT LITTLE THEORY, *OKAY?*
KRAKKKKLL

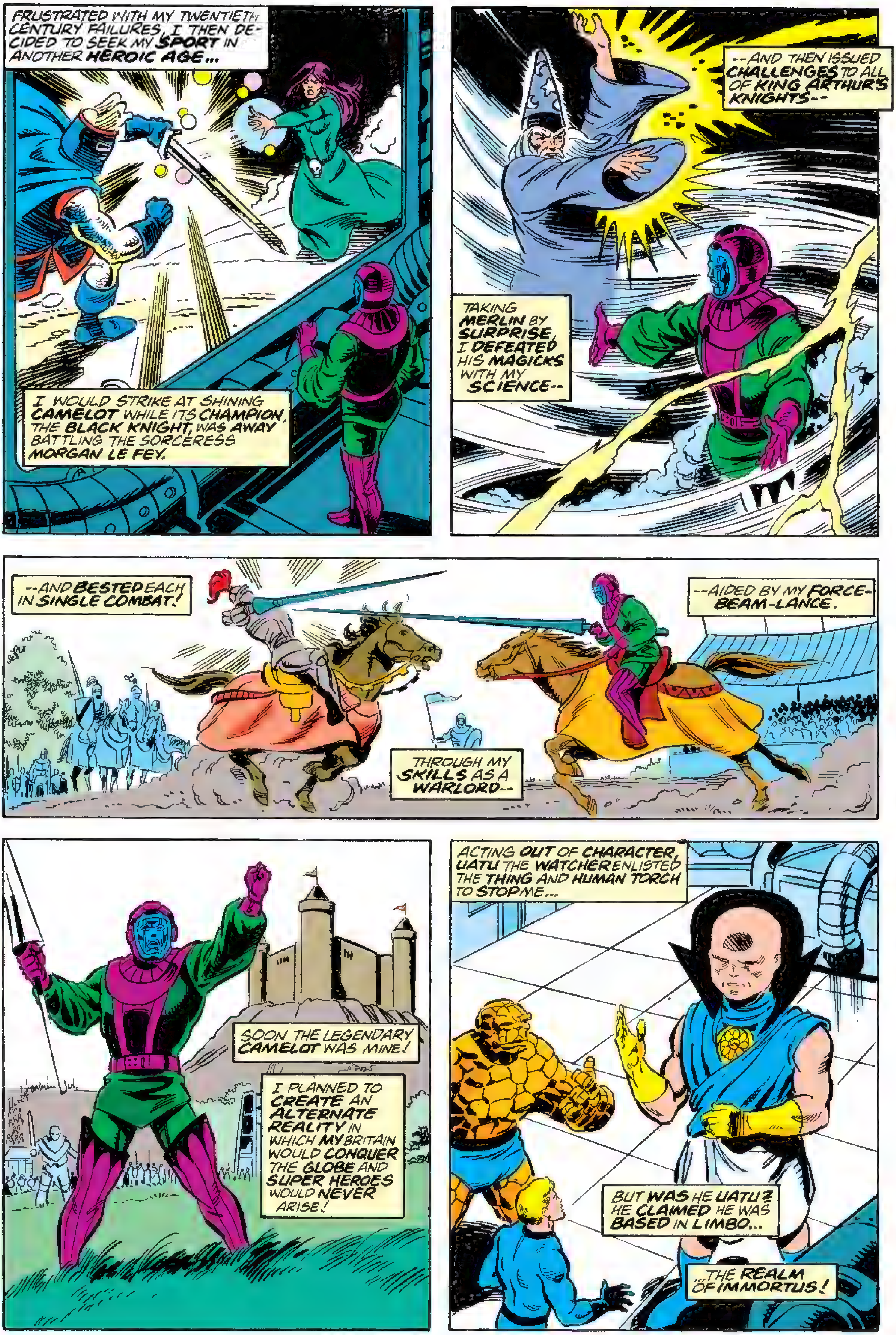

WELL MET HEATHEN!
BUT SEE YOU HOW THE EYE OF AVALON ABSORBS YOUR THUNDERBOLT!
THUS FILLED, IT WILL POSSESS EVEN MORE POWER WITH WHICH TO--
BY THE HOLY SEPULCHER! WHAT IS HAPPENING??
THIS WORLD SWIFTLY FADES BEFORE MY EYES-- AND I BEFORE ITS!
IT--WASN'T EXACTLY ON PURPOSE, FRIEND--
BUT OFFHAND, I'D SAY OL' MJOLNIR TRIGGERED ANOTHER TIME MAELSTROM IN YOUR EVIL EYE--
--AND GUESS WHERE YOU'RE GOING TO WIND UP!
IF HE'S LUCKY, AT LEAST KANG WON'T BE WAITING FOR HIM IN THE 12th CENTURY THIS TIME!
I FIGURE P.J. WILL PROCEED WITH HIS CHAIR OF SURVIVAL SHTICK-- AND BECOME THE F.F.'S PROBLEM, A MILLENNIUM FROM NOW.
WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF HE DOESN'T EVEN RECALL ANY OF THIS LITTLE EPISODE.
BUT THEN, WHAT DO I KNOW?
I'M JUST A POOPED UNDERSTUDY FOR A THUNDER GOD, NOT THE GENUINE ARTICLE.
WELL, AT LEAST, WITH P.J. GONE, THE LANDSCAPES GO BACK TO NORMAL, SO--
<PAGAN DEVIL!>
NOW WHAT?
< HOW CAN YOU REMAIN ON EARTH-- WHEN MY POWERFUL PROTECTOR HAS VANISHED? >
< WELL, EVEN SO, YOU WILL NOT SAVE ROLLO THE NORTHMAN FROM MY ROYAL WRATH! >
< FRANKISH SWINE! IF MY MEN RETURN FROM THEIR HEADLONG FLIGHT BEFORE YOURS DO, I SHALL-- >
CHARLES AND ROLLO-- READY TO GO FOR EACH OTHER'S THROATS AGAIN!
AND, P.J. OR NO P.J., THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK OUT.
SO, I'D BETTER HURRY UP AND--

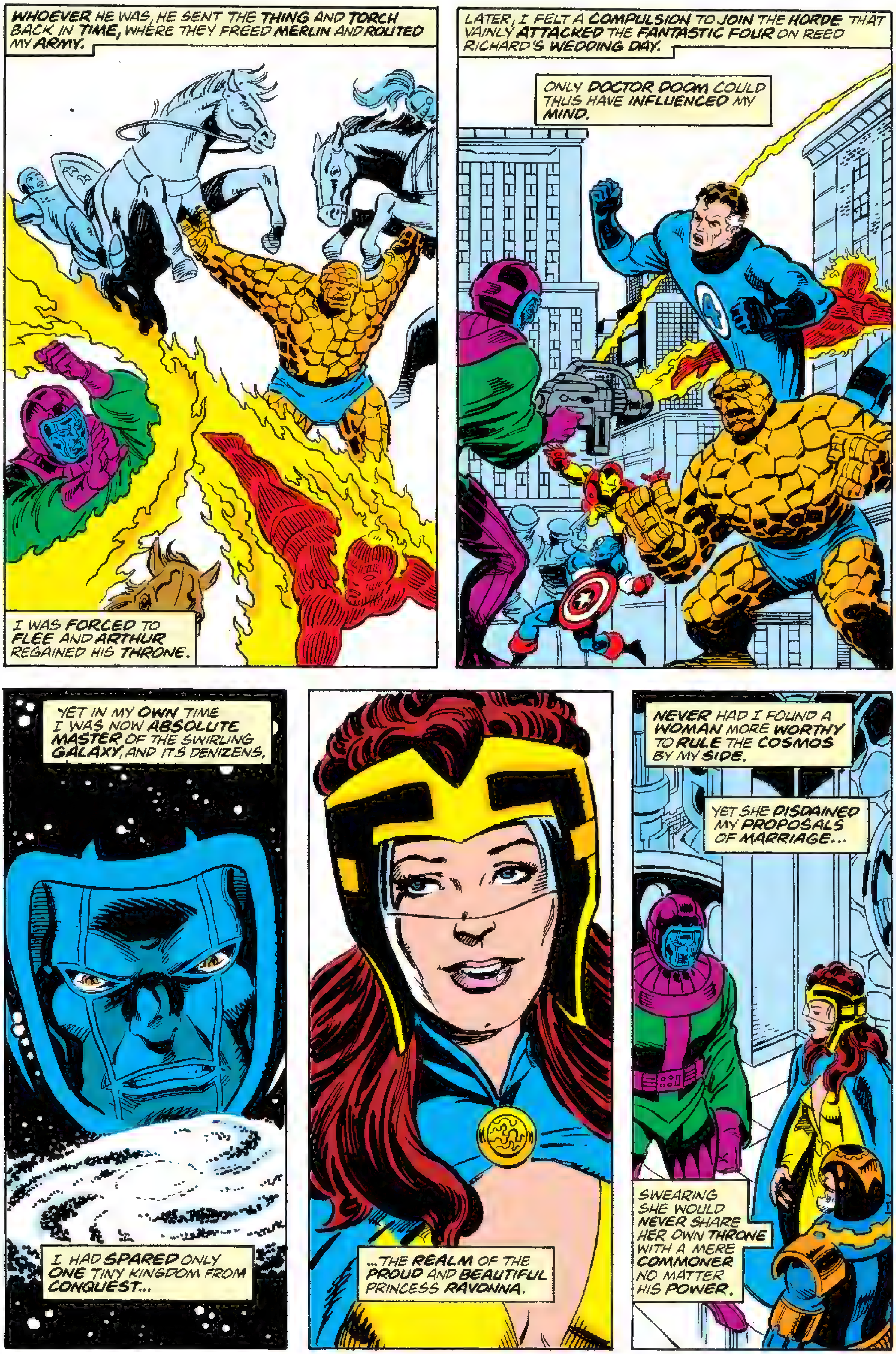

--PLAY PEACE-MAKER!
<BY TYR--WHAT--?>
<YOUR HEATHEN DEMON GRASPS MY WRIST, AS WELL, NORTH-MAN!>
<DOES HE MEAN TO KILL US BOTH?>
<BUT--NO! HE HAS MERELY JOINED OUR HANDS--IN A BROTHERLY CLASP!>
AS MY OLD GRADE-SCHOOL TEACHER USED TO SAY--
--"I WANT YOU TWO BOYS TO SHAKE HANDS!"
<I--I BELIEVE HE MEANS US TO BE ALLIES, WHETHER WE WILL IT OR NO!>
<PERHAPS GREAT THOR HAS HEARD, AS I DID, THAT YOU MEANT TO OFFER ME OVERLORDSHIP OF NORMANDY!>
<THAT I DID, VIKING, TILL PRESTER JOHN DISSUADED ME.>
<SWEAR FEALTY TO ME, AND BECOME IN RETURN MY COUNT OF ROUEN.>
<BY ALL THE GODS OF ASGARD! YOU WILL RECOGNIZE MY RULE OF THIS PROVINCE, FOR A SHOW OF VASSAL-SHIP?>
<AYE. BUT YOU MUST FIRST BE BAPTIZED A CHRISTIAN, AND VOW TO UPHOLD THE ONE TRUE FAITH THROUGHOUT THE REALM.>
<DONE! WHY, MY MEN AND I SHALL EVEN HURL ANY FUTURE NORSEMEN ARRIVALS BACK INTO THE SEA!>
<THEN, THERE REMAINS BUT ONE THING TO DO ERE THE SCRIBBLERS DRAW US UP A TREATY...>
<DENOUNCE THIS FALSE IDOL THAT STALKS OUR MIDST--AND SEND HIM BACK TO HELLISH REGIONS WHERE HE BELONGS!>
<DONE!>
HUH? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU TWO ARE UP TO--
--BUT IF YOU THINK YOU CAN GANG UP ON SOMEBODY WITH THE POWER OF THOR--

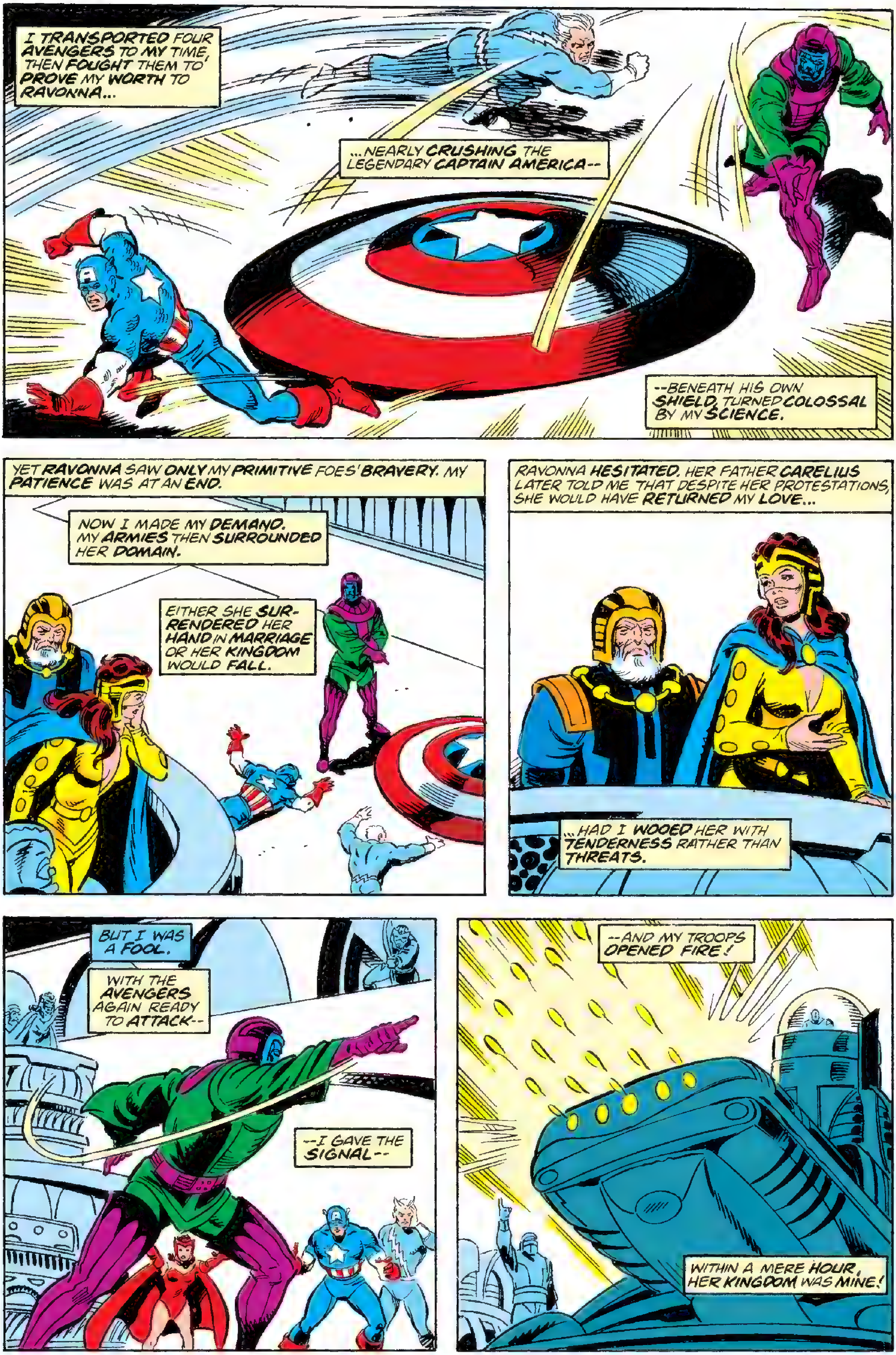

--DARNED IF IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU *CAN!*
SURE! I DIDN'T REALIZE IT BEFORE-- BUT IT WAS PROBABLY THE VIKINGS' *BELIEF IN THOR* THAT PULLED ME *HERE*, INSTEAD OF SOMEPLACE ELSE!
OBVIOUSLY, ROLLO'S *RENOUNCING* ME, TO GET IN GOOD WITH *GOOD KING CHAZ*--
--SO I'M *NOT* LONG FOR THIS WORLD!
I'LL JUST LET MYSELF *GO WITH THE FLOW*, AND--
HUH? I NEVER NOTICED IT BEFORE, BUT THERE'S THAT *FUTURE CITY-- CHRONOPOLIS*-- THAT PRESTER JOHN SAID BELONGED TO *KANG!*
NOW *THAT'S* ONE PLACE I *DO* WANT TO GET TO!
IF I CAN *REACH* IT-- BEFORE I DO A *TOTAL FADE-OUT*--!
BLAST! I THINK I'M *TOO LATE*--
--'*WAY* TOO LATE!
ABOUT A *THOUSAND YEARS*, I'D SAY!
I RECOGNIZE THIS PLACE FROM *OLD PHOTOS!* IT'S THE FORMER IMMIGRATION CENTER AT *ELLIS ISLAND*, OFF NEW YORK--
--EARLY IN THE *20TH* CENTURY, IF I CAN JUDGE BY THESE *CLOTHES!*
AND WHAT WAS *YOUR* NAME BACK IN THE OLD COUNTRY, FELLOW?
WHAT? *UH*-- THOR. JUST *THOR.*
SURE. AN' MINE'S *JEHOVAH*. WELL, FROM NOW ON, YOU'RE *THOR SMITH*.
NEXT!
WELL, AT LEAST *HERE*, I CAN *RELAX* FOR A LITTLE WHILE, WITHOUT--
"*CITIZEN KANG*" CONTINUES-- IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR *ANNUAL # 25!* -Ralf

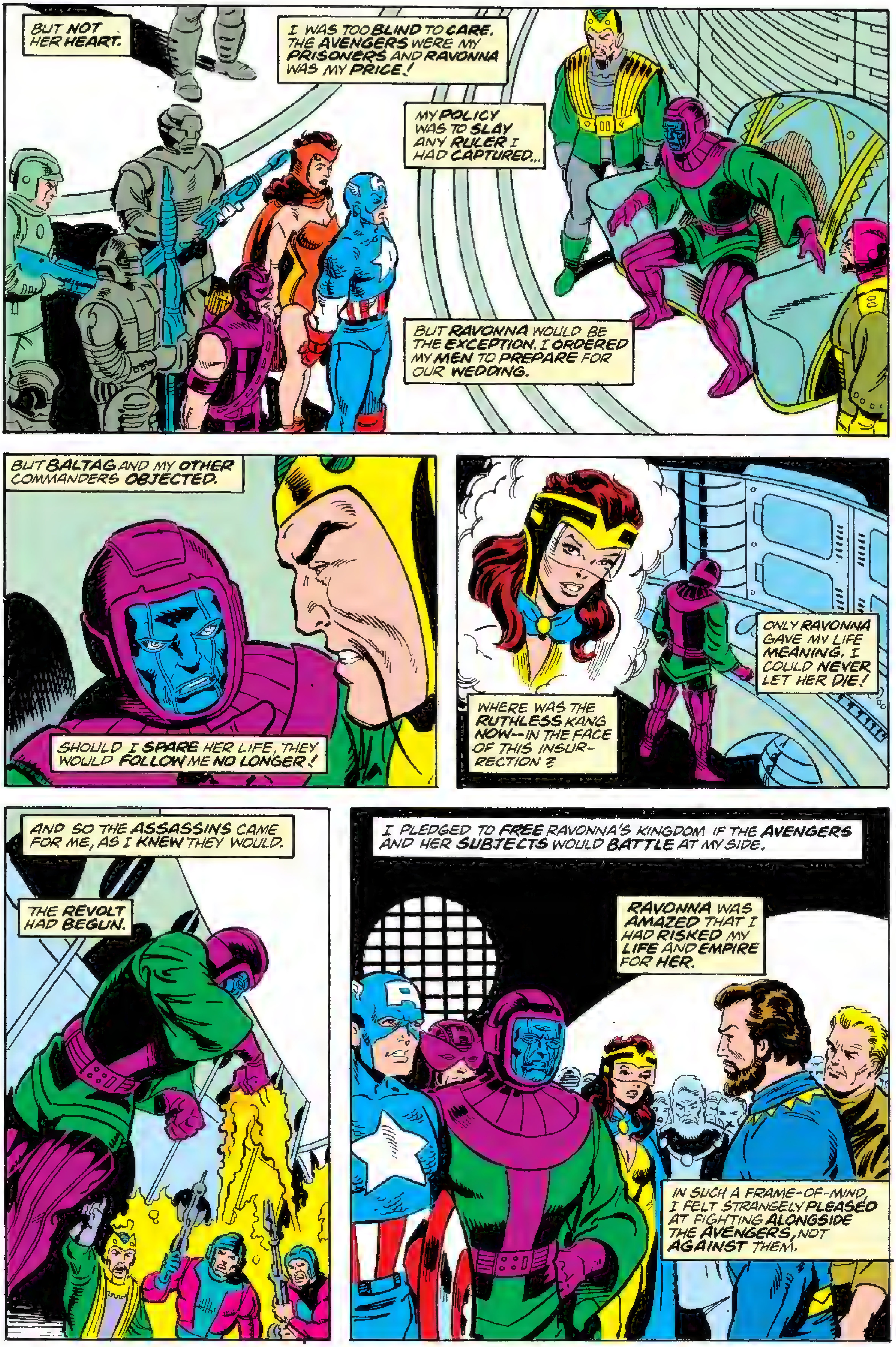

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
KANG in:
PARADISE LOST
I AM KNOWN AND FEARED BY BILLIONS AS KANG THE CONQUEROR.
I HAD CONQUERED TIME AND SPACE. I HAD EVEN TRANSCENDED MY OWN MORTALITY.
BUT I WAS A FRAUD. FOR YEARS I SPENT HALF OF EACH DAY MOURNING MY GREATEST FAILURE.
NOT ALL MY POWER AND KNOWLEDGE COULD RESURRECT THE ONLY WOMAN I EVER LOVED.
KANG CREATED BY STAN LEE AND JACK KIRBY

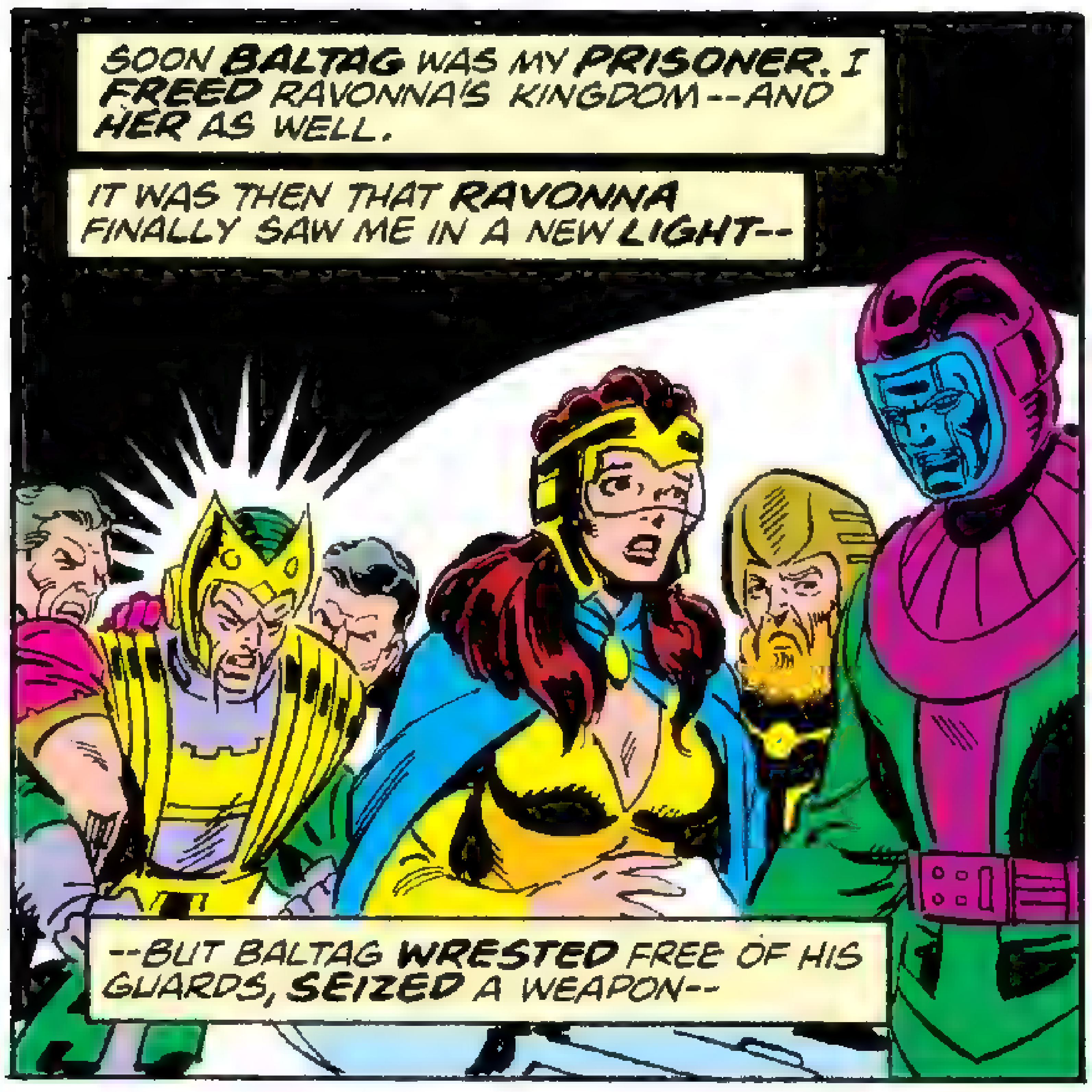

BEFORE I MET HER I THOUGHT MY POWER WAS LIMITLESS.
HAVING MADE 41ST CENTURY EARTH MY OWN, I SET OUT ON THE CONQUEST OF OTHER WORLDS. MY HUNGER -- INSATIABLE.
SOON I BECAME THE DOMINANT POWER IN THE MILLION WORLDS OF THE MILKY WAY GALAXY.
EVEN OTHER GALACTIC EMPIRES BEGAN TO FEAR MY MIGHT.
BUT MY DEFEAT BY THE AVENGERS STILL RANKLED.
ALMOST OBSESSED, I MONITORED THEIR ACTIVITIES SINCE WE LAST STRUGGLED...
...AND THUS LEARNED OF ANOTHER TIME LORD, IMMORTUS, WHO SEEMED THEIR ENEMY.
WOULD HE PROVE A POTENTIAL ALLY TO ME, OR A RIVAL?
BUT MY FIRST PRIORITY WAS TO DESTROY THE CURSED ANENGERS.
I WOULD INFILTRATE THEIR RANKS WITH A ROBOT ASSASSIN.
...CREATED AS A DOUBLE OF THE MYSTERIOUS NEW HERO...
...SPIDER-MAN!
THE IRONY OF A HEROIC DOPPELGANGER PLEASED ME. BUT THE REAL SPIDER-MAN INTERVENED--
--BESTING MY ASSASSIN IN MIDAIR COMBAT!

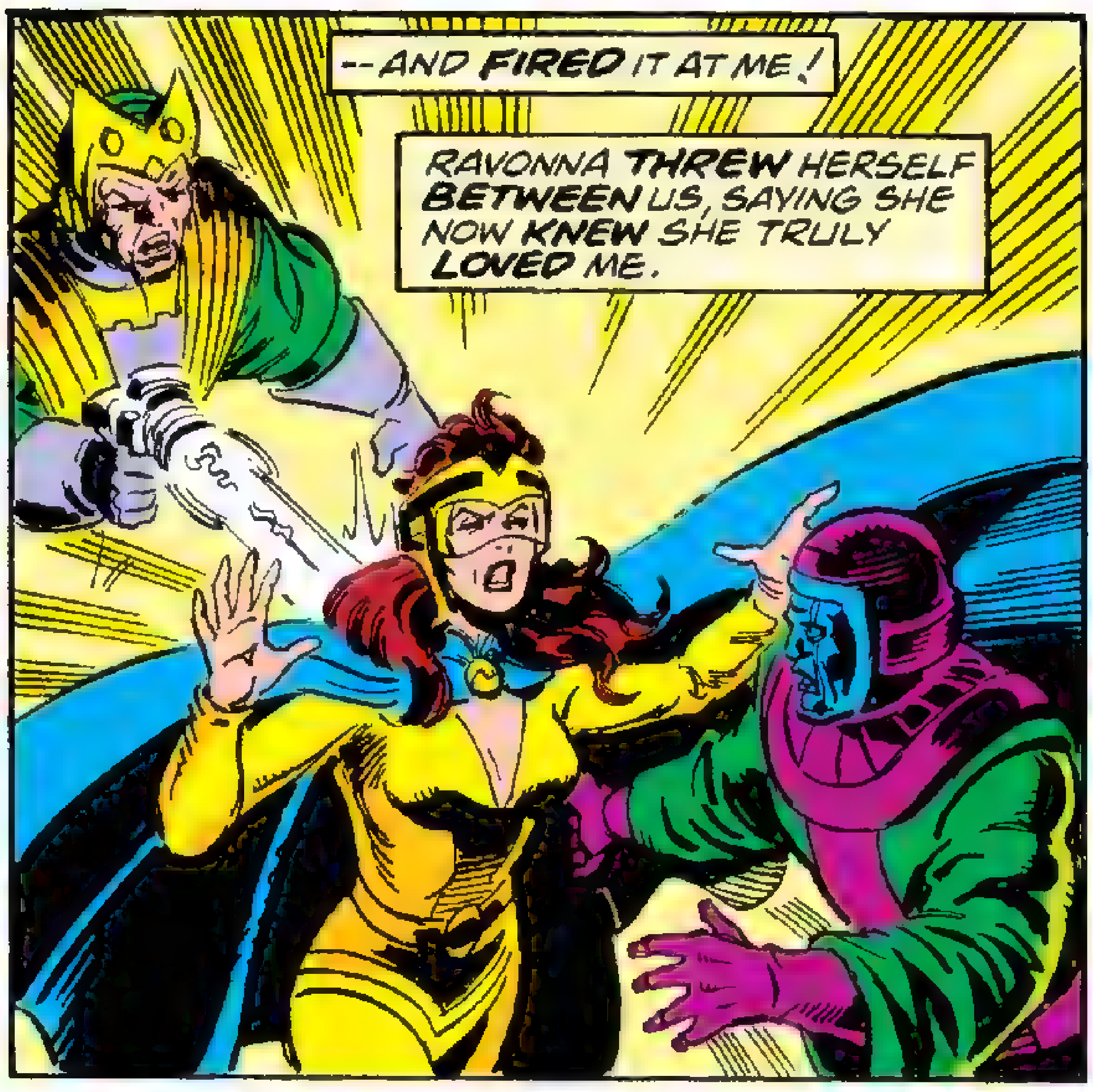

FRUSTRATED WITH MY TWENTIETH CENTURY FAILURES, I THEN DECIDED TO SEEK MY SPORT IN ANOTHER HEROIC AGE...
I WOULD STRIKE AT SHINING CAMELOT WHILE ITS CHAMPION, THE BLACK KNIGHT, WAS AWAY BATTLING THE SORCERESS MORGAN LE FEY.
--AND THEN ISSUED CHALLENGES TO ALL OF KING ARTHUR'S KNIGHTS--
TAKING MERLIN BY SURPRISE, I DEFEATED HIS MAGICKS WITH MY SCIENCE--
--AND BESTED EACH IN SINGLE COMBAT!
THROUGH MY SKILLS AS A WARLORD--
--AIDED BY MY FORCE-BEAM-LANCE.
SOON THE LEGENDARY CAMELOT WAS MINE!
I PLANNED TO CREATE AN ALTERNATE REALITY IN WHICH MY BRITAIN WOULD CONQUER THE GLOBE AND SUPER HEROES WOULD NEVER ARISE!
ACTING OUT OF CHARACTER, UATU THE WATCHER ENLISTED THE THING AND HUMAN TORCH TO STOP ME...
BUT WAS HE UATU? HE CLAIMED HE WAS BASED IN LIMBO...
...THE REALM OF IMMORTUS!

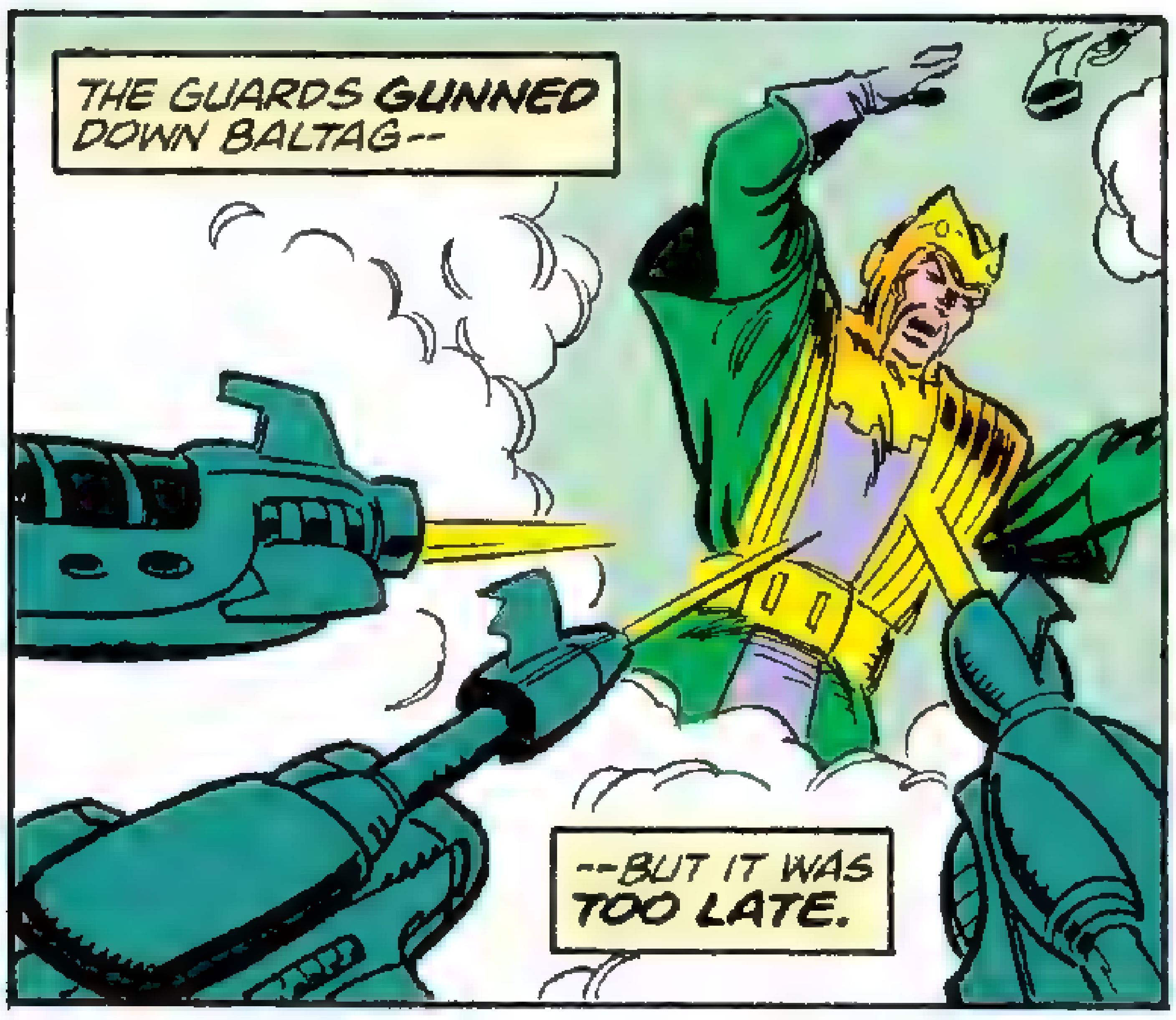

WHOEVER HE WAS, HE SENT THE THING AND TORCH BACK IN TIME, WHERE THEY FREED MERLIN AND ROUTED MY ARMY.
I WAS FORCED TO FLEE AND ARTHUR REGAINED HIS THRONE.
LATER, I FELT A COMPULSION TO JOIN THE HORDE THAT VAINLY ATTACKED THE FANTASTIC FOUR ON REED RICHARD'S WEDDING DAY.
ONLY DOCTOR DOOM COULD THUS HAVE INFLUENCED MY MIND.
YET IN MY OWN TIME I WAS NOW ABSOLUTE MASTER OF THE SWIRLING GALAXY, AND ITS DENIZENS.
I HAD SPARED ONLY ONE TINY KINGDOM FROM CONQUEST...
...THE REALM OF THE PROUD AND BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS RAVONNA.
NEVER HAD I FOUND A WOMAN MORE WORTHY TO RULE THE COSMOS BY MY SIDE.
YET SHE DISDAINED MY PROPOSALS OF MARRIAGE...
SWEARING SHE WOULD NEVER SHARE HER OWN THRONE WITH A MERE COMMONER NO MATTER HIS POWER.

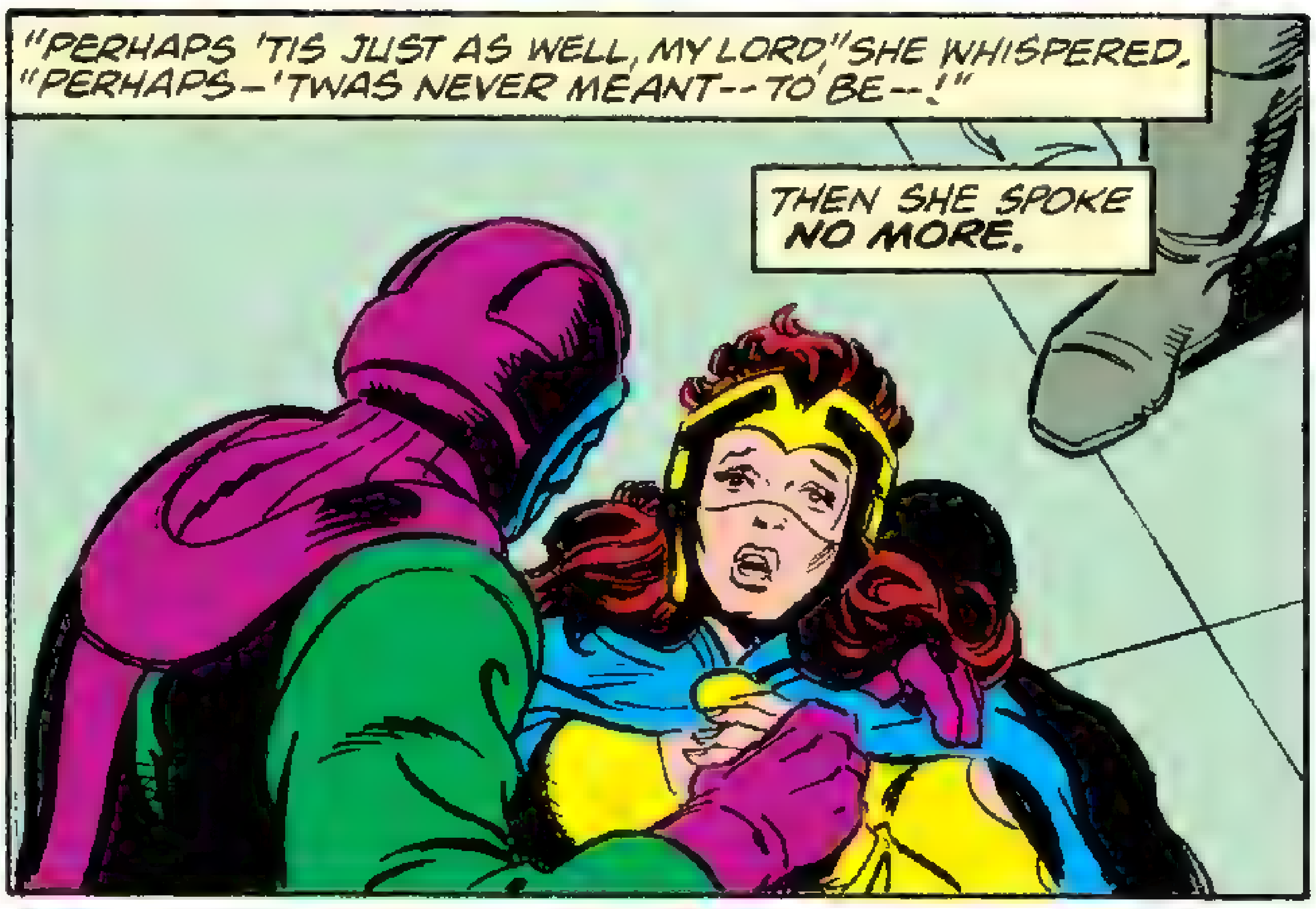

I TRANSPORTED FOUR AVENGERS TO MY TIME, THEN FOUGHT THEM TO PROVE MY WORTH TO RAVONNA...
...NEARLY CRUSHING THE LEGENDARY CAPTAIN AMERICA--
--BENEATH HIS OWN SHIELD, TURNED COLOSSAL BY MY SCIENCE.
YET RAVONNA SAW ONLY MY PRIMITIVE FOES' BRAVERY. MY PATIENCE WAS AT AN END.
NOW I MADE MY DEMAND. MY ARMIES THEN SURROUNDED HER DOMAIN.
EITHER SHE SURRENDERED HER HAND IN MARRIAGE OR HER KINGDOM WOULD FALL.
RAVONNA HESITATED. HER FATHER CARELIUS LATER TOLD ME THAT DESPITE HER PROTESTATIONS, SHE WOULD HAVE RETURNED MY LOVE...
...HAD I WOOED HER WITH TENDERNESS RATHER THAN THREATS.
BUT I WAS A FOOL.
WITH THE AVENGERS AGAIN READY TO ATTACK--
--I GAVE THE SIGNAL--
--AND MY TROOPS OPENED FIRE!
WITHIN A MERE HOUR, HER KINGDOM WAS MINE!

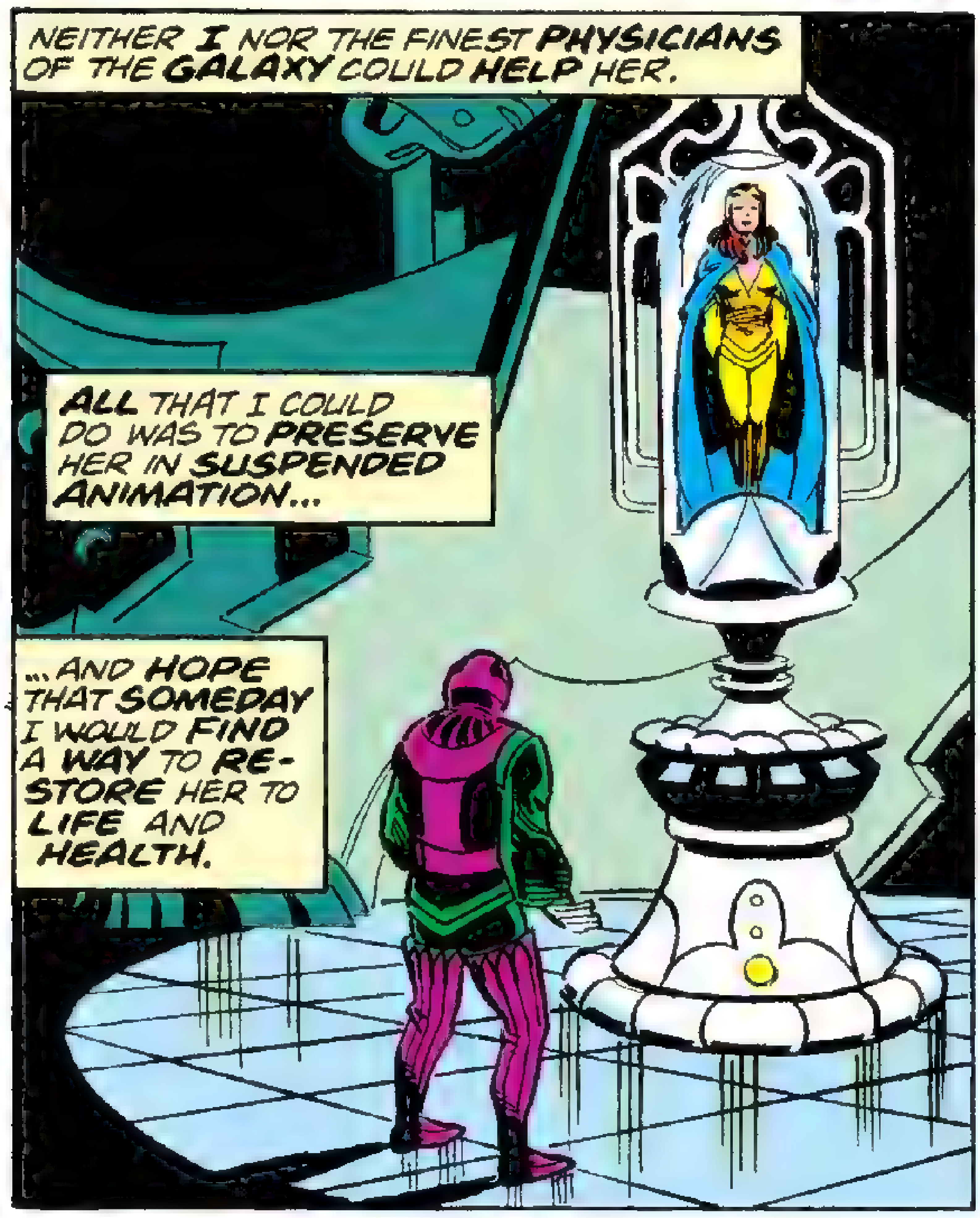

BUT NOT HER HEART.
I WAS TOO BLIND TO CARE. THE AVENGERS WERE MY PRISONERS AND RAVONNA WAS MY PRICE!
MY POLICY WAS TO SLAY ANY RULER I HAD CAPTURED...
BUT RAVONNA WOULD BE THE EXCEPTION. I ORDERED MY MEN TO PREPARE FOR OUR WEDDING.
BUT BALTAG AND MY OTHER COMMANDERS OBJECTED.
SHOULD I SPARE HER LIFE, THEY WOULD FOLLOW ME NO LONGER!
ONLY RAVONNA GAVE MY LIFE MEANING. I COULD NEVER LET HER DIE!
WHERE WAS THE RUTHLESS KANG NOW--IN THE FACE OF THIS INSURRECTION?
AND SO THE ASSASSINS CAME FOR ME, AS I KNEW THEY WOULD.
THE REVOLT HAD BEGUN.
I PLEDGED TO FREE RAVONNA'S KINGDOM IF THE AVENGERS AND HER SUBJECTS WOULD BATTLE AT MY SIDE.
RAVONNA WAS AMAZED THAT I HAD RISKED MY LIFE AND EMPIRE FOR HER.
IN SUCH A FRAME-OF-MIND, I FELT STRANGELY PLEASED AT FIGHTING ALONGSIDE THE AVENGERS, NOT AGAINST THEM.

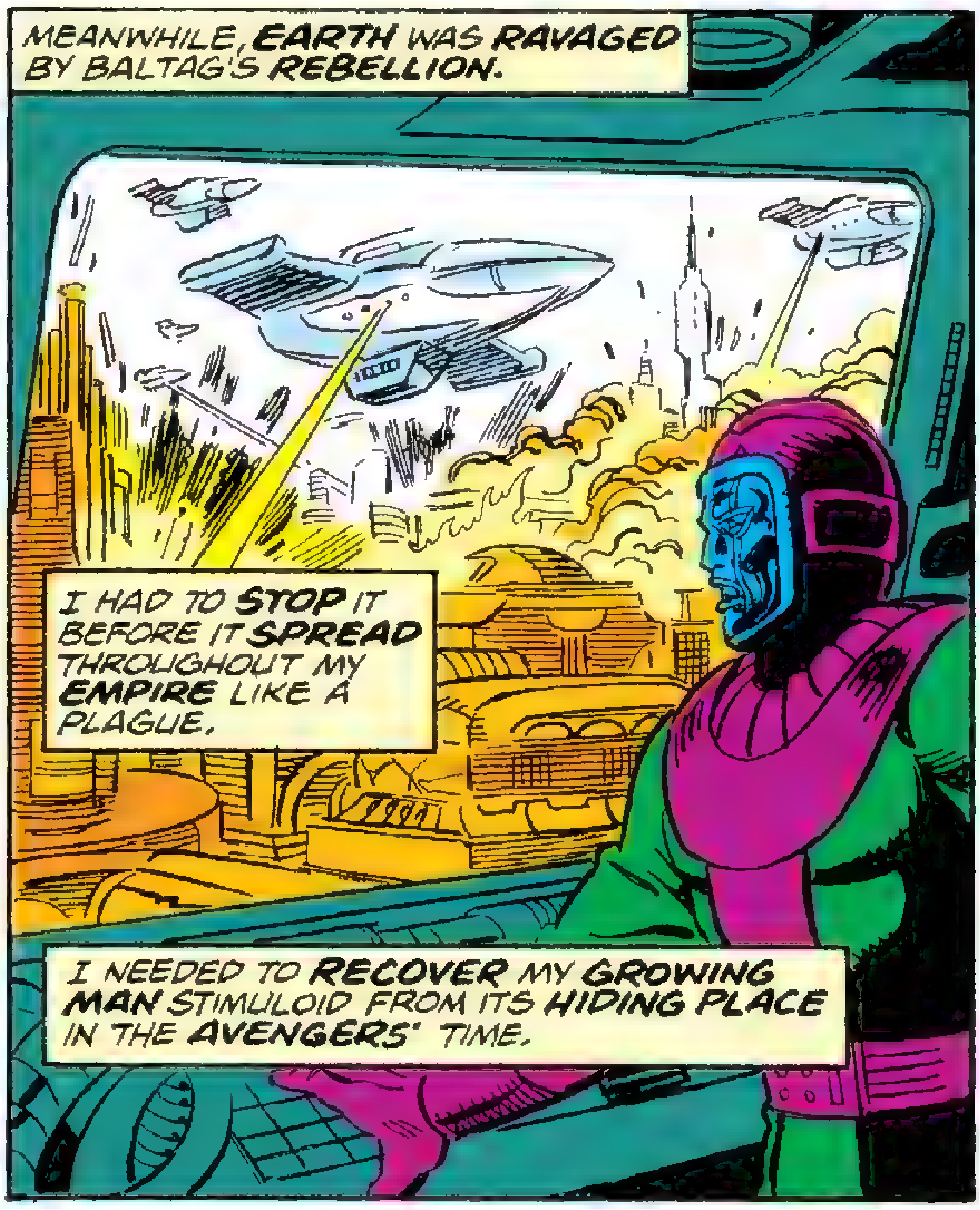

SOON **BALTAG** WAS MY **PRISONER**. I **FREED** RAVONNA'S KINGDOM--AND **HER** AS WELL.
IT WAS THEN THAT **RAVONNA** FINALLY SAW ME IN A NEW **LIGHT**--
--BUT BALTAG **WRESTED** FREE OF HIS GUARDS, **SEIZED** A WEAPON--

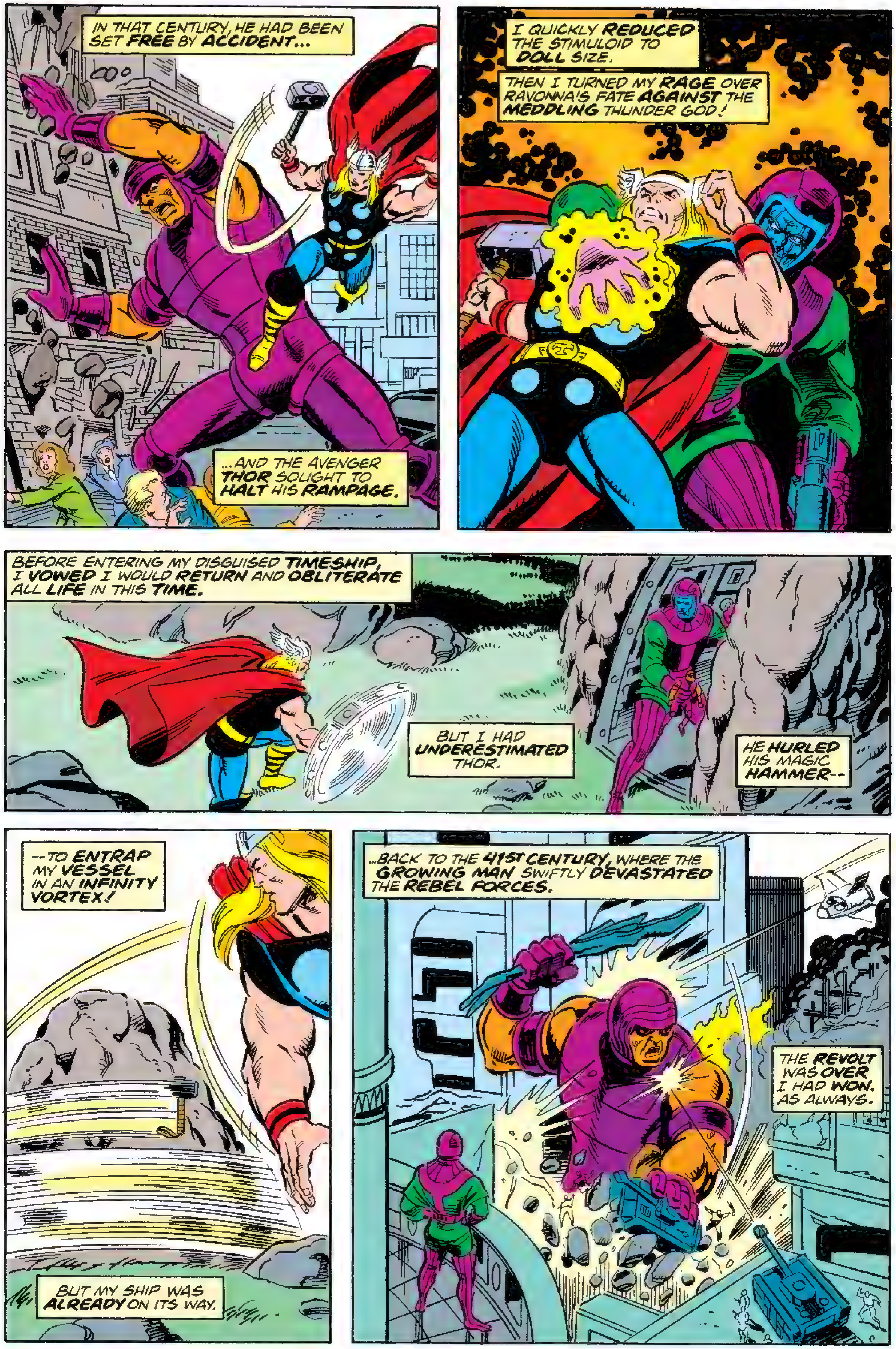

--AND **FIRED** IT AT ME!
RAVONNA **THREW** HERSELF **BETWEEN** US, SAYING SHE NOW **KNEW** SHE TRULY **LOVED** ME.

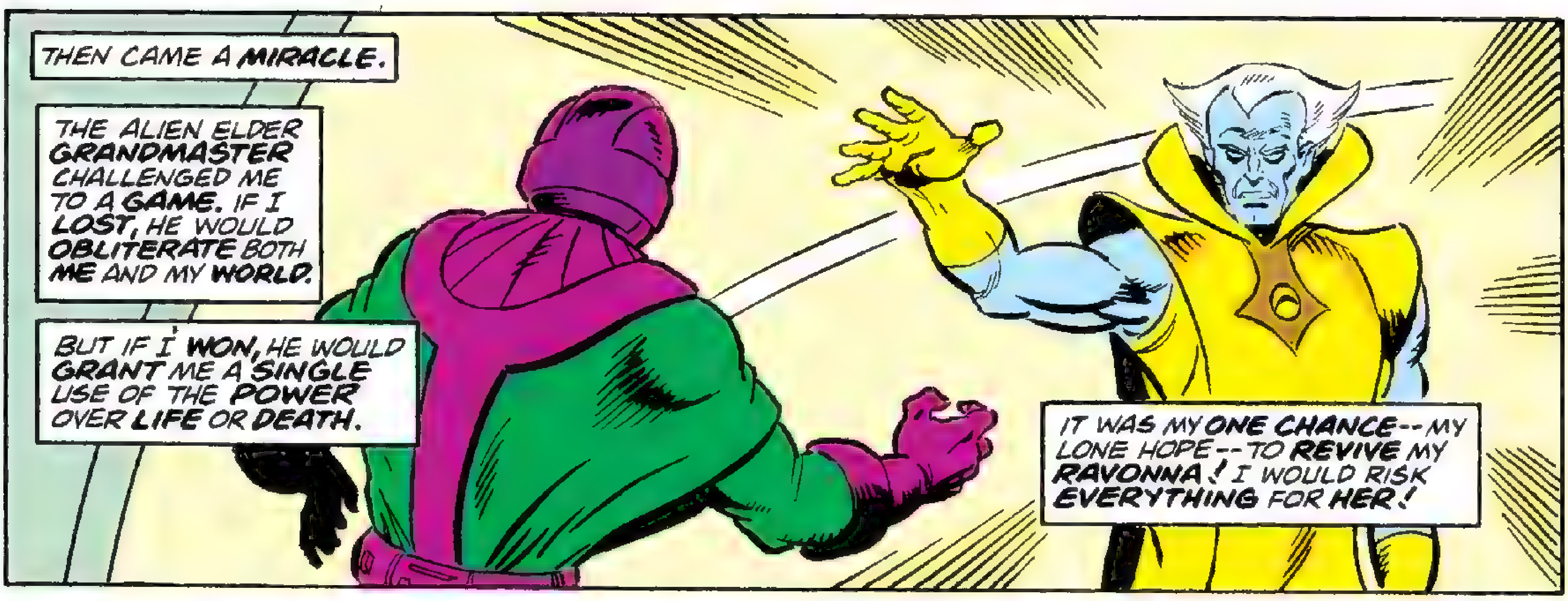

THE GUARDS **GUNNED** DOWN BALTAG--
--BUT IT WAS **TOO LATE.**

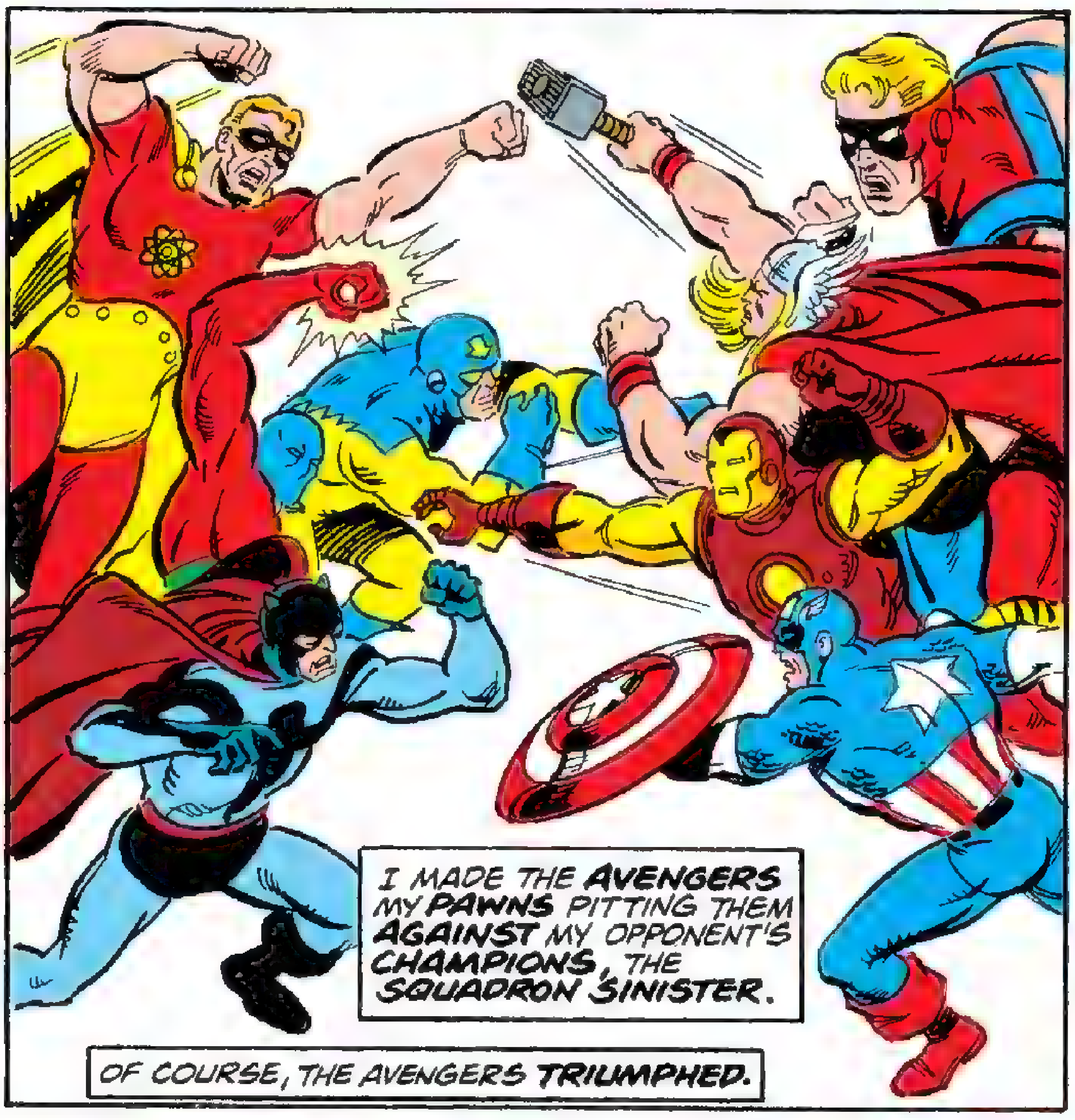

"PERHAPS 'TIS JUST AS WELL, MY LORD" SHE WHISPERED. "PERHAPS--'TWAS NEVER MEANT--TO BE--!"
THEN SHE SPOKE **NO MORE.**

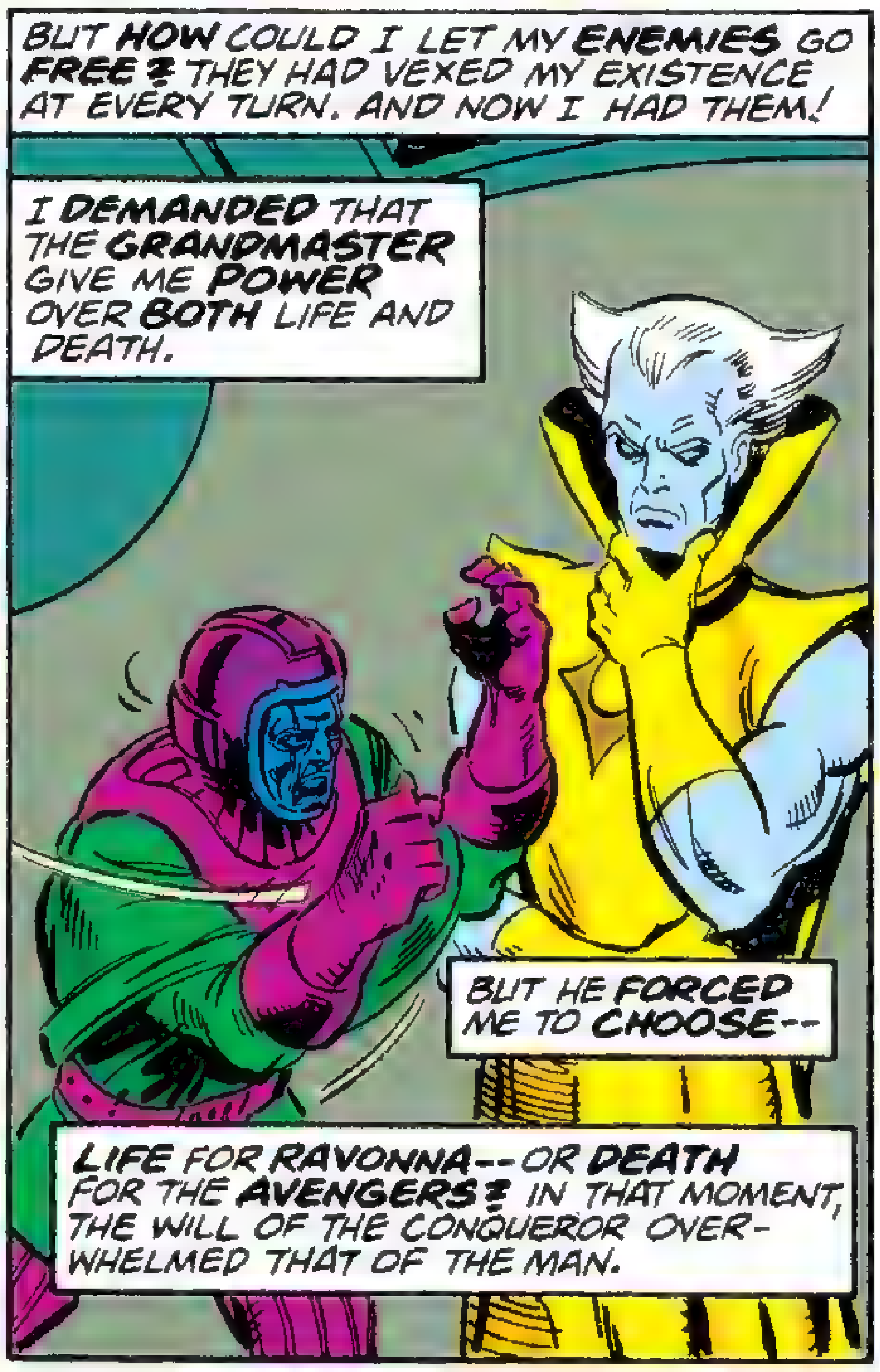

NEITHER **I** NOR THE FINEST **PHYSICIANS** OF THE **GALAXY** COULD **HELP** HER.
ALL THAT I COULD DO WAS TO **PRESERVE** HER IN **SUSPENDED ANIMATION**...
...AND **HOPE** THAT **SOMEDAY** I WOULD **FIND** A **WAY** TO **RESTORE** HER TO **LIFE** AND **HEALTH.**

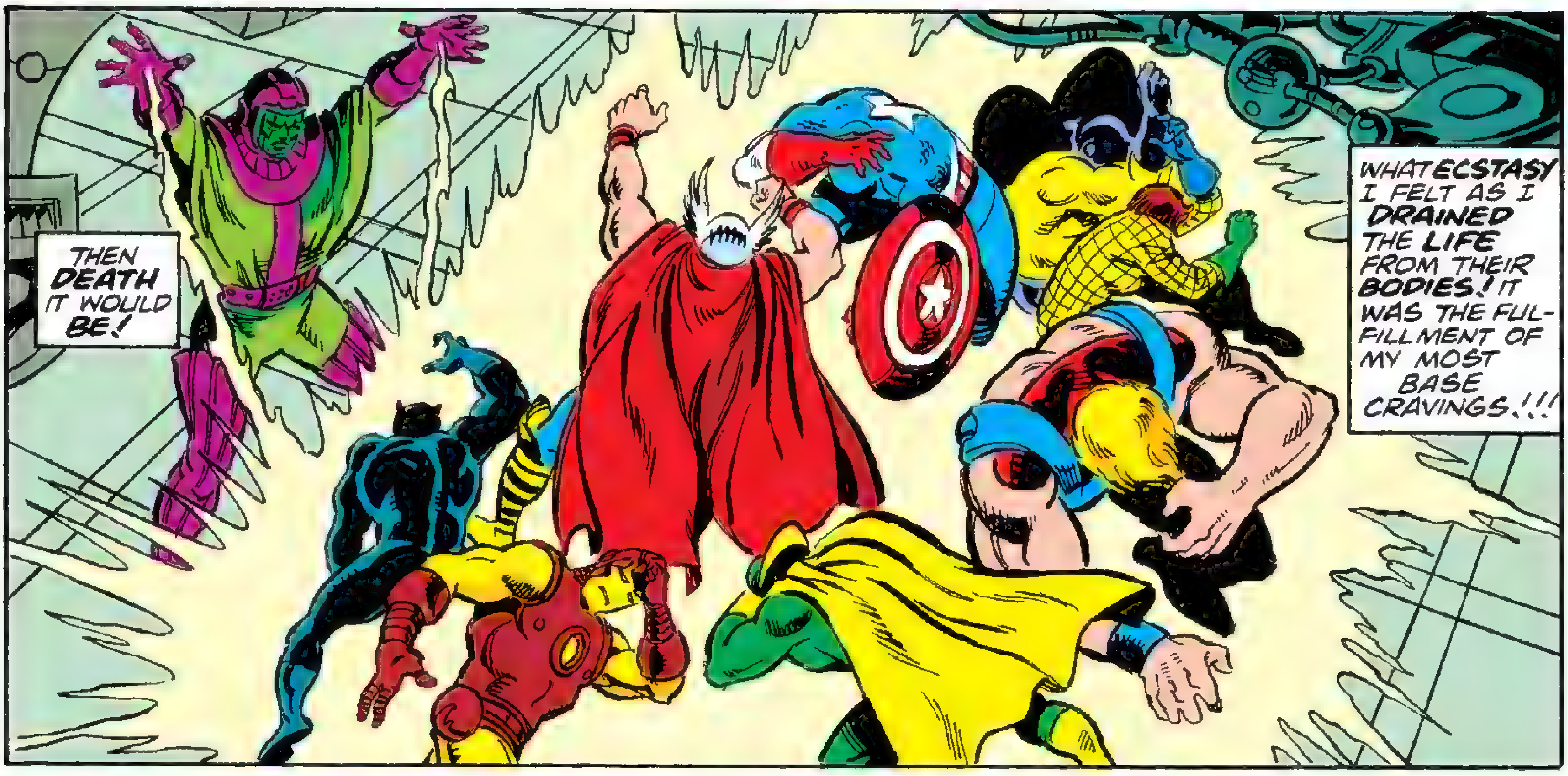

MEANWHILE, **EARTH** WAS **RAVAGED** BY BALTAG'S **REBELLION.**
I HAD TO **STOP** IT BEFORE IT **SPREAD** THROUGHOUT MY **EMPIRE** LIKE A PLAGUE.
I NEEDED TO **RECOVER** MY **GROWING MAN** STIMULOID FROM ITS **HIDING PLACE** IN THE **AVENGERS'** TIME.

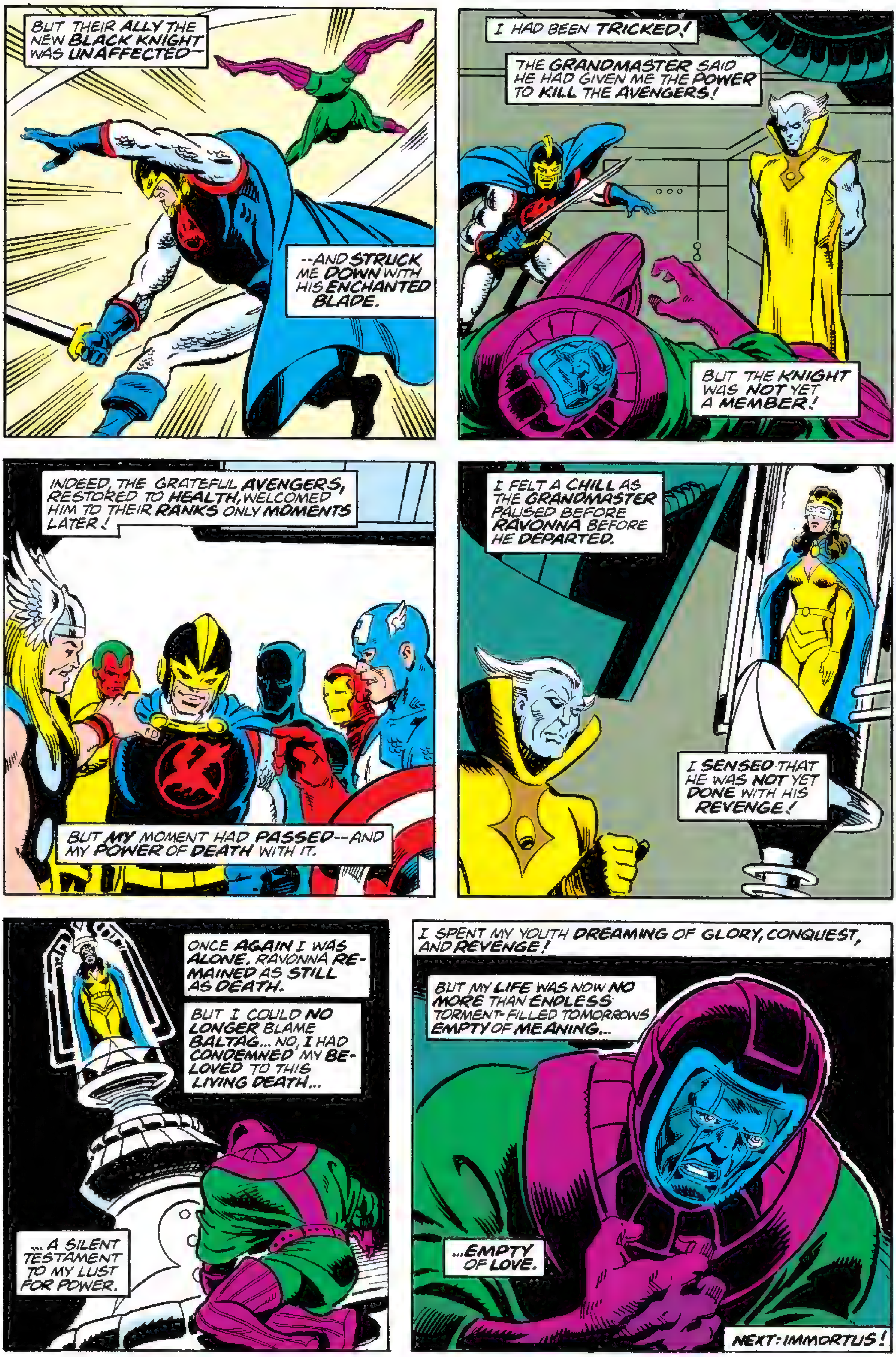

IN THAT CENTURY, HE HAD BEEN SET **FREE** BY **ACCIDENT**...
...AND THE AVENGER **THOR** SOUGHT TO **HALT** HIS **RAMPAGE**.
I QUICKLY **REDUCED** THE STIMULOID TO **DOLL** SIZE.
THEN I TURNED MY **RAGE** OVER RAVONNA'S FATE **AGAINST** THE **MEDDLING** THUNDER GOD!
BEFORE ENTERING MY DISGUISED **TIMESHIP**, I **VOWED** I WOULD **RETURN** AND **OBLITERATE** ALL **LIFE** IN THIS **TIME**.
BUT I HAD **UNDERESTIMATED** THOR.
HE **HURLED** HIS MAGIC **HAMMER**--
--TO **ENTRAP** MY **VESSEL** IN AN **INFINITY VORTEX!**
BUT MY SHIP WAS **ALREADY** ON ITS WAY.
..BACK TO THE **41ST CENTURY**, WHERE THE **GROWING MAN** SWIFTLY **DEVASTATED** THE **REBEL FORCES**.
THE **REVOLT** WAS **OVER**. I HAD **WON**. AS ALWAYS.


THEN CAME A **MIRACLE**.
THE ALIEN ELDER **GRANDMASTER** CHALLENGED ME TO A **GAME**. IF I **LOST**, HE WOULD **OBLITERATE** BOTH **ME** AND MY **WORLD**.
BUT IF I **WON**, HE WOULD **GRANT** ME A **SINGLE** USE OF THE **POWER** OVER **LIFE** OR **DEATH**.
IT WAS MY **ONE CHANCE**--MY LONE HOPE--TO **REVIVE** MY **RAVONNA**! I WOULD RISK **EVERYTHING** FOR **HER**!

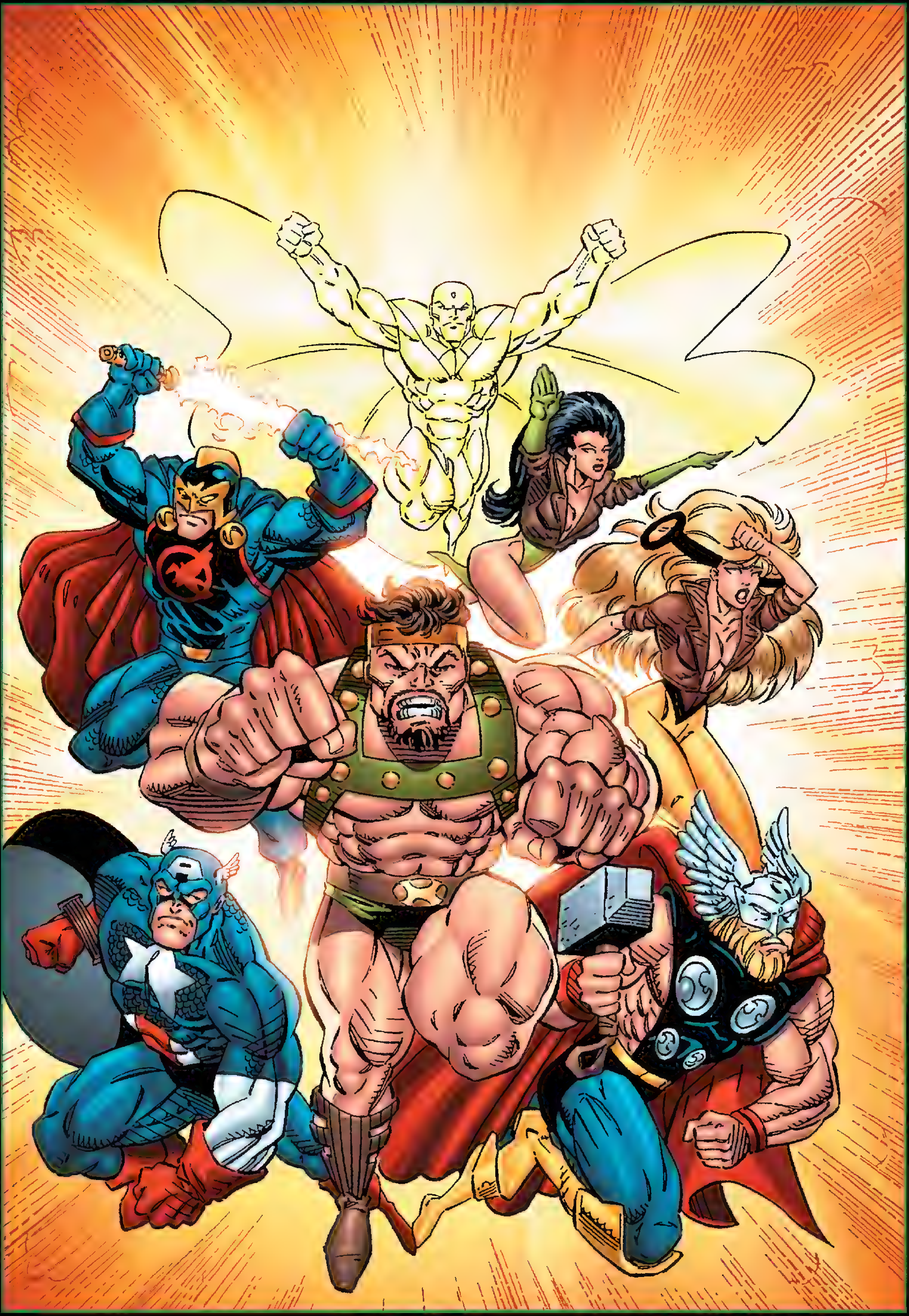

I MADE THE **AVENGERS** MY **PAWNS** PITTING THEM **AGAINST** MY OPPONENT'S **CHAMPIONS**, THE **SQUADRON SINISTER**.
OF COURSE, THE AVENGERS **TRIUMPHED**.


BUT **HOW** COULD I LET MY **ENEMIES** GO **FREE**? THEY HAD VEXED MY EXISTENCE AT EVERY TURN. AND NOW I HAD THEM!
I **DEMANDED** THAT THE **GRANDMASTER** GIVE ME **POWER** OVER **BOTH** LIFE AND DEATH.
BUT HE **FORCED** ME TO **CHOOSE**--
LIFE FOR **RAVONNA**--OR **DEATH** FOR THE **AVENGERS**? IN THAT MOMENT, THE WILL OF THE CONQUEROR OVERWHELMED THAT OF THE MAN.

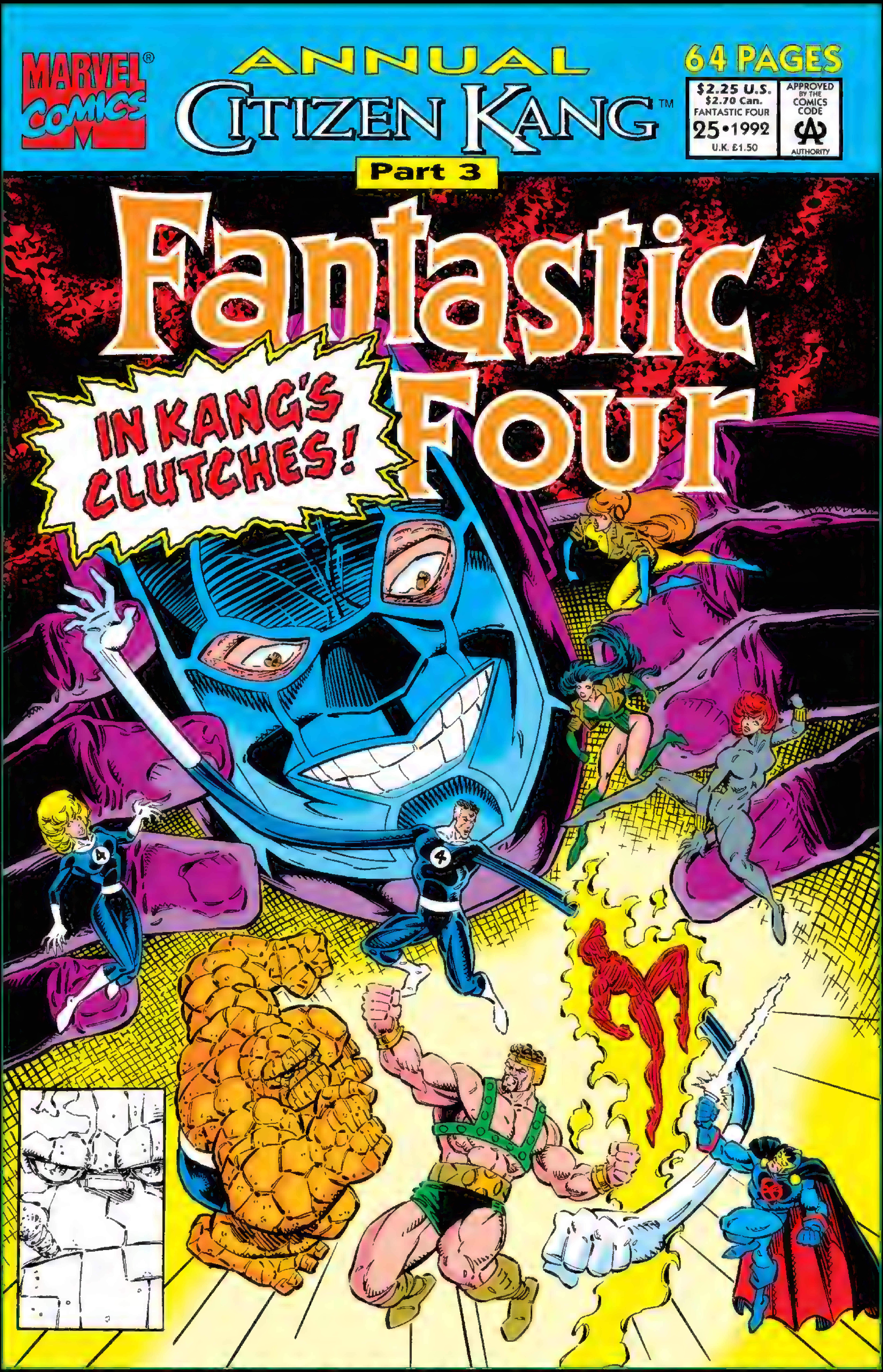

THEN **DEATH** IT WOULD **BE**!
WHAT **ECSTASY** I FELT AS I **DRAINED** THE **LIFE** FROM THEIR **BODIES**! IT WAS THE FULFILLMENT OF MY MOST BASE CRAVINGS!!!


BUT THEIR ALLY THE NEW BLACK KNIGHT WAS UNAFFECTED--
--AND STRUCK ME DOWN WITH HIS ENCHANTED BLADE.
I HAD BEEN TRICKED!
THE GRANDMASTER SAID HE HAD GIVEN ME THE POWER TO KILL THE AVENGERS!
BUT THE KNIGHT WAS NOT YET A MEMBER!
INDEED, THE GRATEFUL AVENGERS, RESTORED TO HEALTH, WELCOMED HIM TO THEIR RANKS ONLY MOMENTS LATER!
BUT MY MOMENT HAD PASSED--AND MY POWER OF DEATH WITH IT.
I FELT A CHILL AS THE GRANDMASTER PAUSED BEFORE RAVONNA BEFORE HE DEPARTED.
I SENSED THAT HE WAS NOT YET DONE WITH HIS REVENGE!
ONCE AGAIN I WAS ALONE. RAVONNA REMAINED AS STILL AS DEATH.
BUT I COULD NO LONGER BLAME BALTAG... NO, I HAD CONDEMNED MY BELOVED TO THIS LIVING DEATH...
...A SILENT TESTAMENT TO MY LUST FOR POWER.
I SPENT MY YOUTH DREAMING OF GLORY, CONQUEST, AND REVENGE!
BUT MY LIFE WAS NOW NO MORE THAN ENDLESS TORMENT-FILLED TOMORROWS EMPTY OF MEANING...
...EMPTY OF LOVE.
NEXT: IMMORTUS!

the THOR
CORPS
DAN PANOSIAN



AVENGERS: CITIZEN KANG TPB COVER ART BY DAN PANOSIAN & THOMAS MASON


MARVEL COMICS
ANNUAL
CITIZEN KANG™
64 PAGES
$2.25 U.S.
$2.70 Can.
FANTASTIC FOUR
25•1992
U.K. £1.50
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Part 3
Fantastic Four
IN KANG'S CLUTCHES!

“TWICE UPON A TIME...”

WRITER: MARK GRUENWALD • PENCILER: HERB TRIMPE • INKER: BRAD VANCATA • COLORIST: GINA GOING • LETTERER: JANICE CHIANG

“A HALL OF MIRRORS”

WRITER: PETER SANDERSON • PENCILER: RICH YANIZESKI • INKER: RAY KRYSSING • COLORIST: SCOTT MARSHALL • LETTERER: DAVE SHARPE

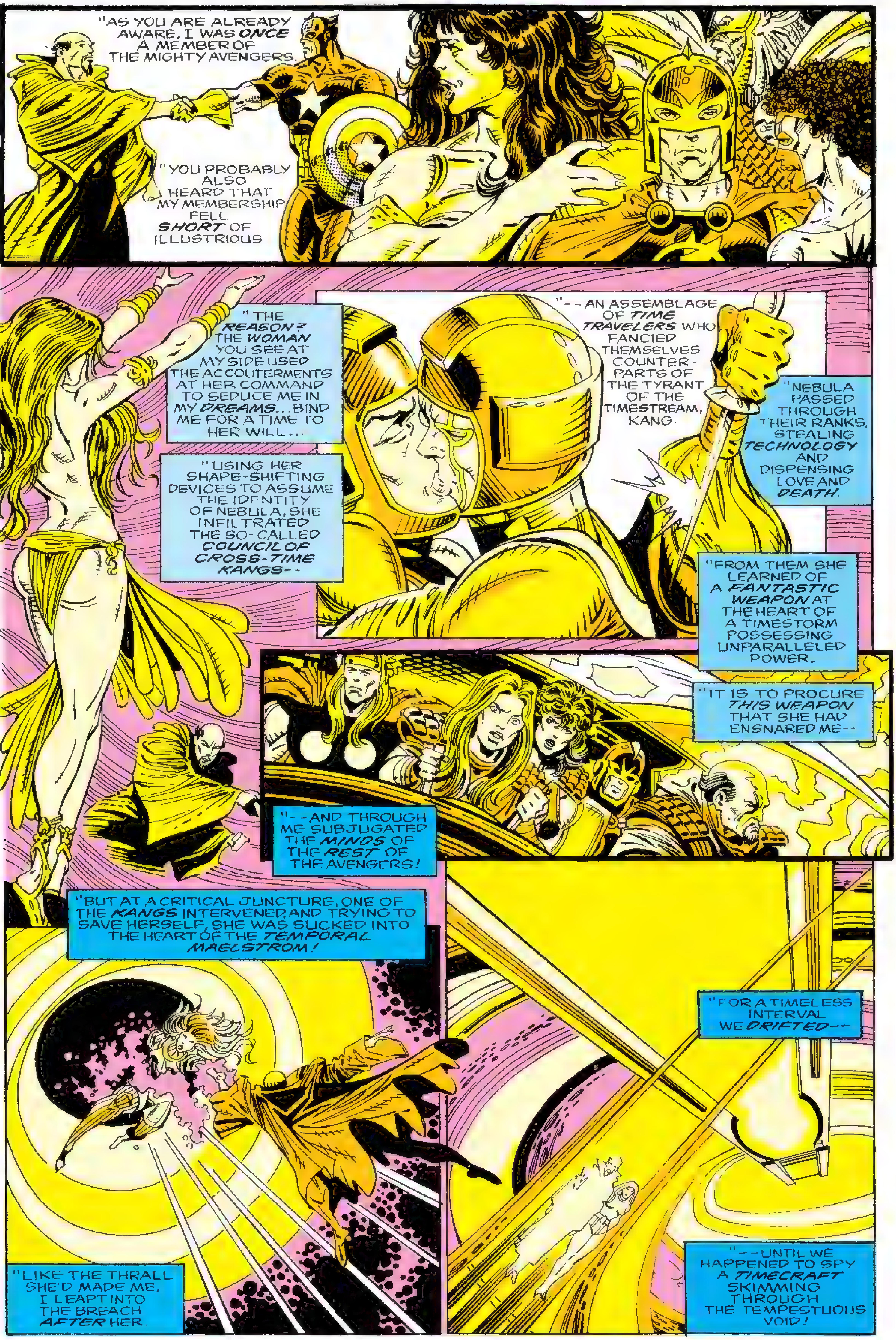
ASSISTANT EDITOR: PAT GARRAHY • EDITOR: RALPH MACCHIO

TWICE UPON A TIME...
NEW YORK CITY ON A HOT JULY NIGHT, MADE A LITTLE HOTTER BY THE FAST AND FIERY *HUMAN TORCH*...
I KNOW IT'S KINDA *IMMATURE* TO BE JOYRIDING LIKE THIS, BUT IF REED OR SUE CALL ME ON THE CARPET--
--I'LL JUST TELL 'EM I WAS TRYING TO BREAK THE *SPEED RECORD* I SET WHEN I WAS 16 FOR FLYING THE LENGTH OF MANHATTAN ISLAND!
THEY'LL *BUY* THAT.

4
AW. MAN-- THE *SIGNAL FIRE!*
IS THIS A *LEGITIMATE EMERGENCY?*
--OR DID REED GET ONE TOO MANY CALLS FROM CONCERNED CITIZENS TELLING HIM THAT THE TORCH HAS GONE *WILD?*
BETTER CHECK IT OUT.
REED...? SUE...?
BEN?
THE SIGNAL WAS COMING FROM THIS ALLEY-- BUT THERE'S *NOBODY HERE!*
UH-OH-- SMELLS LIKE A *TRAP!*
DON'T BE *ALARMED* HUMAN TORCH!
I AM *DOCTOR DRUID* AND I MEAN YOU NO HARM!
THERE'S A CITY ORDINANCE AGAINST COUNTERFEITING OUR *FF SIGNAL*, PAL.
I APOLOGIZE. IT WAS THE BEST WAY I THOUGHT OF TO *SUMMON* YOU.
HUH?
I WISH TO ENLIST THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* TO AID ME AGAINST *KANG THE CONQUEROR*
KANG? YOU MEAN THE AVENGERS' *PRIMO BADDIE?* WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL *THEM?*

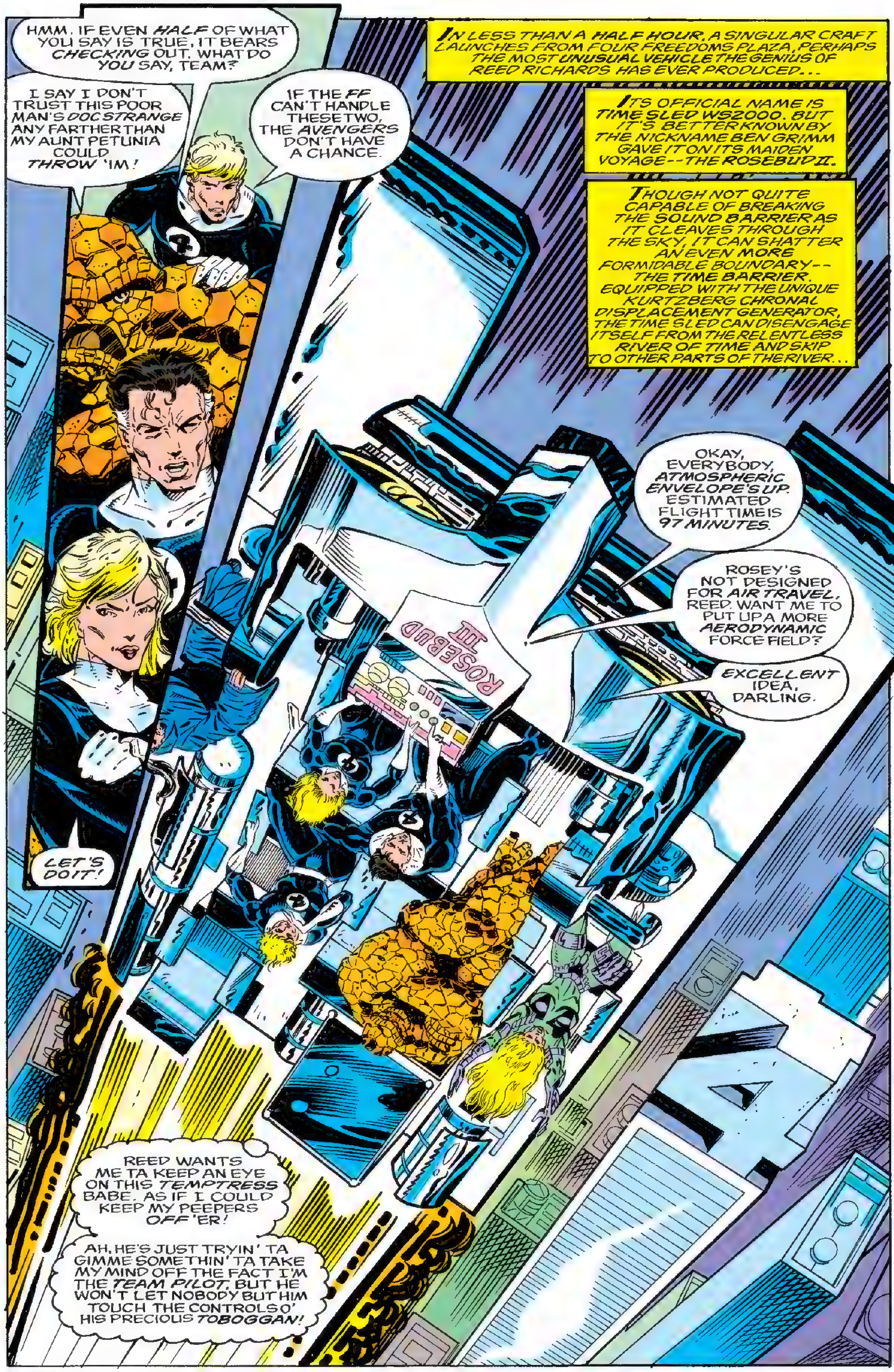
BECAUSE THANKS TO *ME*, THE DOCTOR IS NOT ONE OF THEIR FAVORITE PEOPLE.
WOMAN, I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO STAY *OUT OF SIGHT* AND LET *ME* PRESENT THE CASE AGAINST KANG.
I'VE SEEN THAT WOMAN SOMEWHERE BEFORE--THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT *HER*--I CAN'T TAKE MY *EYES* OFF--!
I JUST WANTED TO SAY HELLO TO *JOHNNY*.
YOU DO *REMEMBER* ME, DON'T YOU, MY FIERY DARLING?
TEMPTRESS! I TOLD YOU I WOULD NOT ALLOW YOU TO EMPLOY *MIND-CONTROL!* WE CONVINCE HIM TO HELP US LEGITIMATELY--
--OR *NOT AT ALL!*
NOW DROP THAT *ILLUSION* AND ASSUME YOUR *TRUE GUISE!*
YOU KNOW, ANTHONY, I LIKED YOU MUCH BETTER *BEFORE* YOU FOUND A WAY TO *RESIST* MY EXOTIC CHARMS.
YOUR STOLEN MIND-MANIPULATING *TECHNOLOGY*, YOU MEAN!
NOW, WOMAN, LET ME TELL THE YOUTH WHAT I'VE LEARNED OF KANG--AND NO *CHICANERY!*
HEY, WHAT'S GOING *ON?* WHO IS *SHE*--?!?
SHE'S GONE BY *MANY NAMES*. I KNEW HER AS *NEBULA*, THOUGH SHE IS *NOT* THE SPACE PIRATE WHO CLAIMED KINSHIP WITH THANOS. SINCE I HAVE YET TO DETERMINE HER TRUE IDENTITY, I SIMPLY CALL HER THE *TEMPTRESS*.

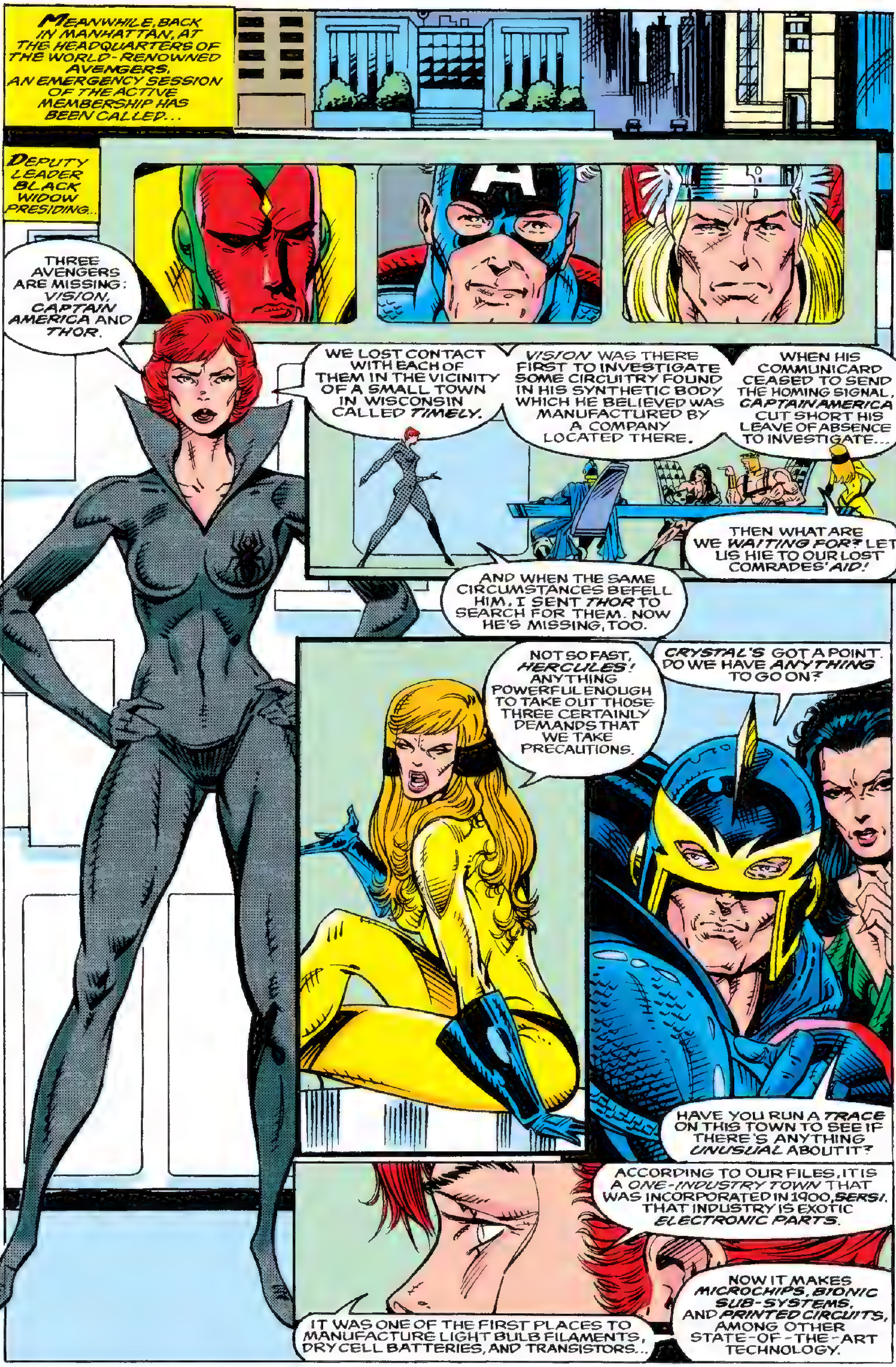
YES, THAT'S A STORY WE'D *ALL* LIKE TO HEAR!
NICE GOIN', *SUZIE*--WE WUZ ABLE TA WALTZ RIGHT UP TO 'EM THANKS TA YER TURNIN' US *INVISIBLE!*
HEY, YOU TWO, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET THE REST OF MY TEAM--*MISTER FANTASTIC*, THE *INVISIBLE WOMAN*, AND THE *THING!*
I'VE LONG *HOPED* TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, DR. RICHARDS. I AM *ANTHONY DRUID.*
YES. I KNOW OF YOU. THE *OCCULT EXPERT* AND *EX-AVENGER*.
THE SAME. YOU ARE JUST IN TIME TO HEAR OUR *TALE.*


"AS YOU ARE ALREADY AWARE, I WAS *ONCE* A MEMBER OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS.
"YOU PROBABLY ALSO HEARD THAT MY MEMBERSHIP FELL *SHORT* OF ILLUSTRIOUS
"THE *REASON?* THE *WOMAN* YOU SEE AT MY SIDE USED THE ACCOUTERMENTS AT HER COMMAND TO SEDUCE ME IN MY *DREAMS*... BIND ME FOR A TIME TO HER WILL...
"USING HER SHAPE-SHIFTING DEVICES TO ASSUME THE IDENTITY OF NEBULA, SHE INFILTRATED THE SO-CALLED *COUNCIL OF CROSS-TIME KANGS*--
"--AN ASSEMBLAGE OF *TIME TRAVELERS* WHO FANCIED THEMSELVES COUNTER-PARTS OF THE TYRANT OF THE TIMESTREAM, KANG.
"NEBULA PASSED THROUGH THEIR RANKS, STEALING *TECHNOLOGY* AND DISPENSING LOVE AND *DEATH*.
"FROM THEM SHE LEARNED OF A *FANTASTIC WEAPON* AT THE HEART OF A TIMESTORM POSSESSING UNPARALLELED POWER.
"IT IS TO PROCURE *THIS WEAPON* THAT SHE HAD ENSNARED ME--
"--AND THROUGH ME SUBJUGATED THE *MINDS* OF THE *REST* OF THE AVENGERS!
"BUT AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE, ONE OF THE *KANGS* INTERVENED, AND TRYING TO SAVE HERSELF, SHE WAS SUCKED INTO THE HEART OF THE *TEMPORAL MAELSTROM!*
"LIKE THE THRALL SHE'D MADE ME, I LEAPT INTO THE BREACH *AFTER* HER.
"FOR A TIMELESS INTERVAL WE *DRIFTED*--
"--UNTIL WE HAPPENED TO SPY A *TIMECRAFT* SKIMMING THROUGH THE TEMPESTUOUS VOID!

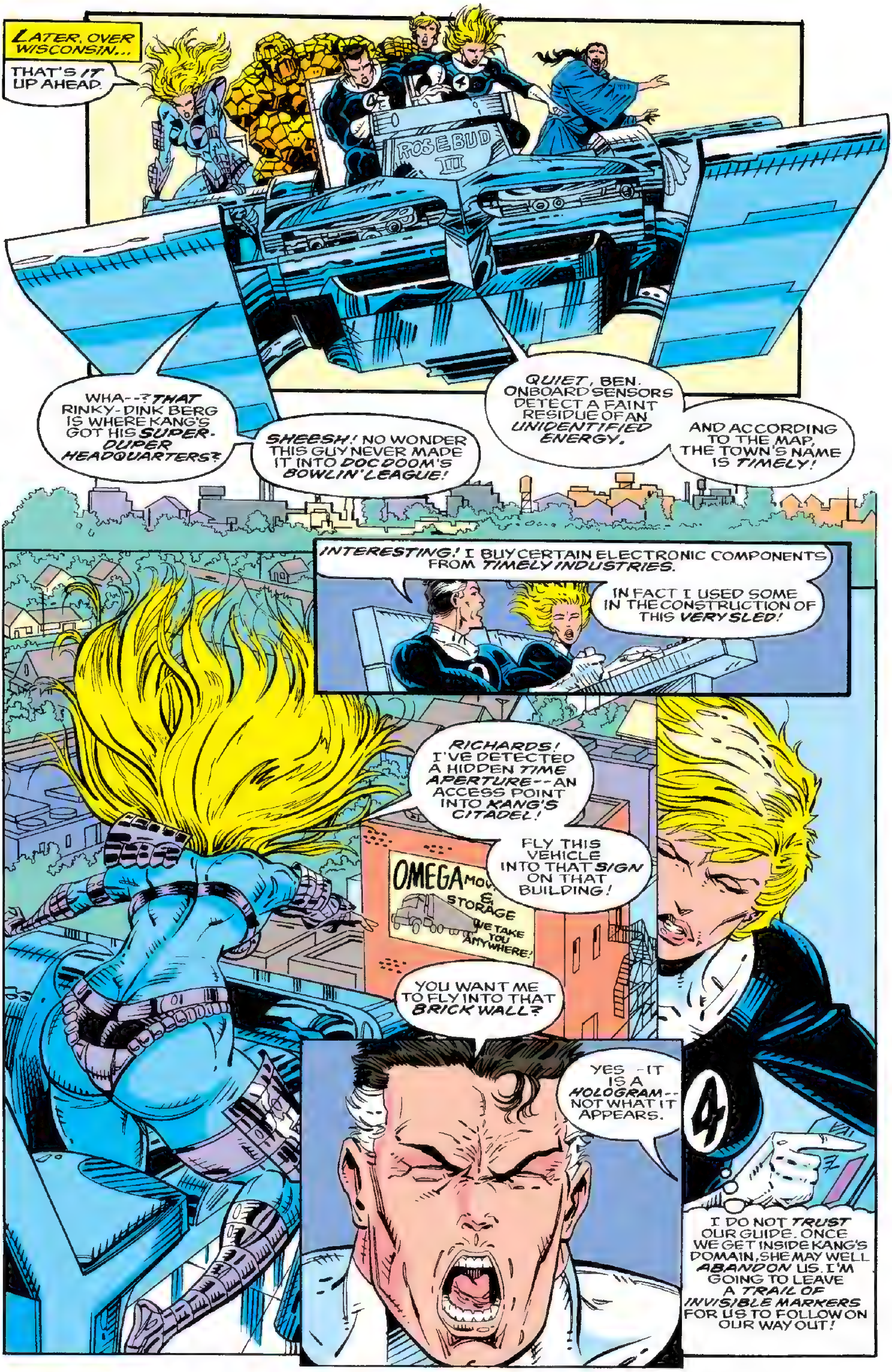
"AGAIN, 'NEBULA' USED HER ILLUSORY POWERS -- THIS TIME TO INFILTRATE *YOUR* RANKS. FIRST SHE BOUND THE *HUMAN TORCH* TO HER WILL.
"AND WHEN HE PROVED UNABLE TO PROCURE THAT TIME-LOCKED WEAPON FOR HER, SHE 'POSSESSED' THE *INVISIBLE WOMAN*--
"--AND SEIZED THE SO-CALLED *ULTIMATE NULLIFIER* TO USE AGAINST YOU AND YOUR ASSOCIATES.
"YOU WERE ONE STEP AHEAD OF HER, HOWEVER, AND RIGGED THE DEVICE TO *EXPEL* HER FROM HER *HOST'S BODY!*
"SHE RETURNED TO ME IN THE TIMESTREAM, WHERE SHE MANAGED TO FIND A WEAPON TO *REPLACE* WHAT SHE'D LOST -- THE SECRET OF *'ANTI-TIME'!*
"RETURNING US TO AN ALTERNATE *PAST*--
"--SHE *RAN AMOK,* INTOXICATED BY THE ACQUISITION OF REAL POWER.
"THROUGH A PROCESS TOO ARDUOUS TO DETAIL, I FINALLY DISENGAGED MY MIND FROM HER DOMINATION, AND *OPPOSED HER,* USING ALL THE *OCCULT POWERS* AT MY COMMAND."
I *VANQUISHED* HER, AND THE SECRET OF "ANTI-TIME" SLIPPED FROM HER GRASP. I'D HOPED TO NEVER *SEE* HER AGAIN-- BUT JUST LAST NIGHT, SHE *REAPPEARED* TO ME--
--TO TELL ME THAT KANG--THE *TRUE KANG*-- IS HERE IN THE *20TH CENTURY!*

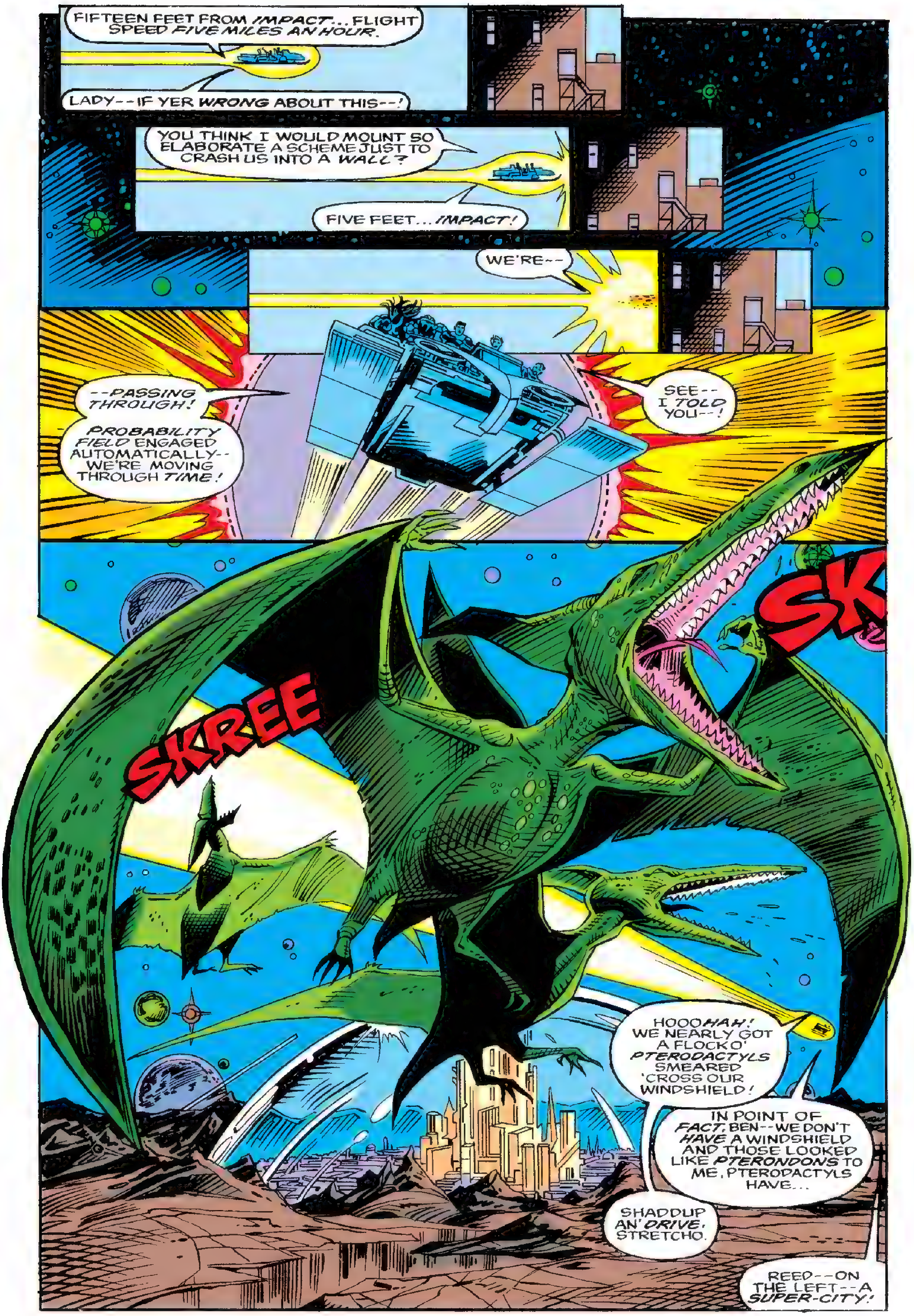
THE PRECEDING ACCOUNT, COURTESY OF AVENGERS #291-297, FANTASTIC FOUR #337-341, AND AVENGERS SPOTLIGHT #37.--'WHEW'!- RALF

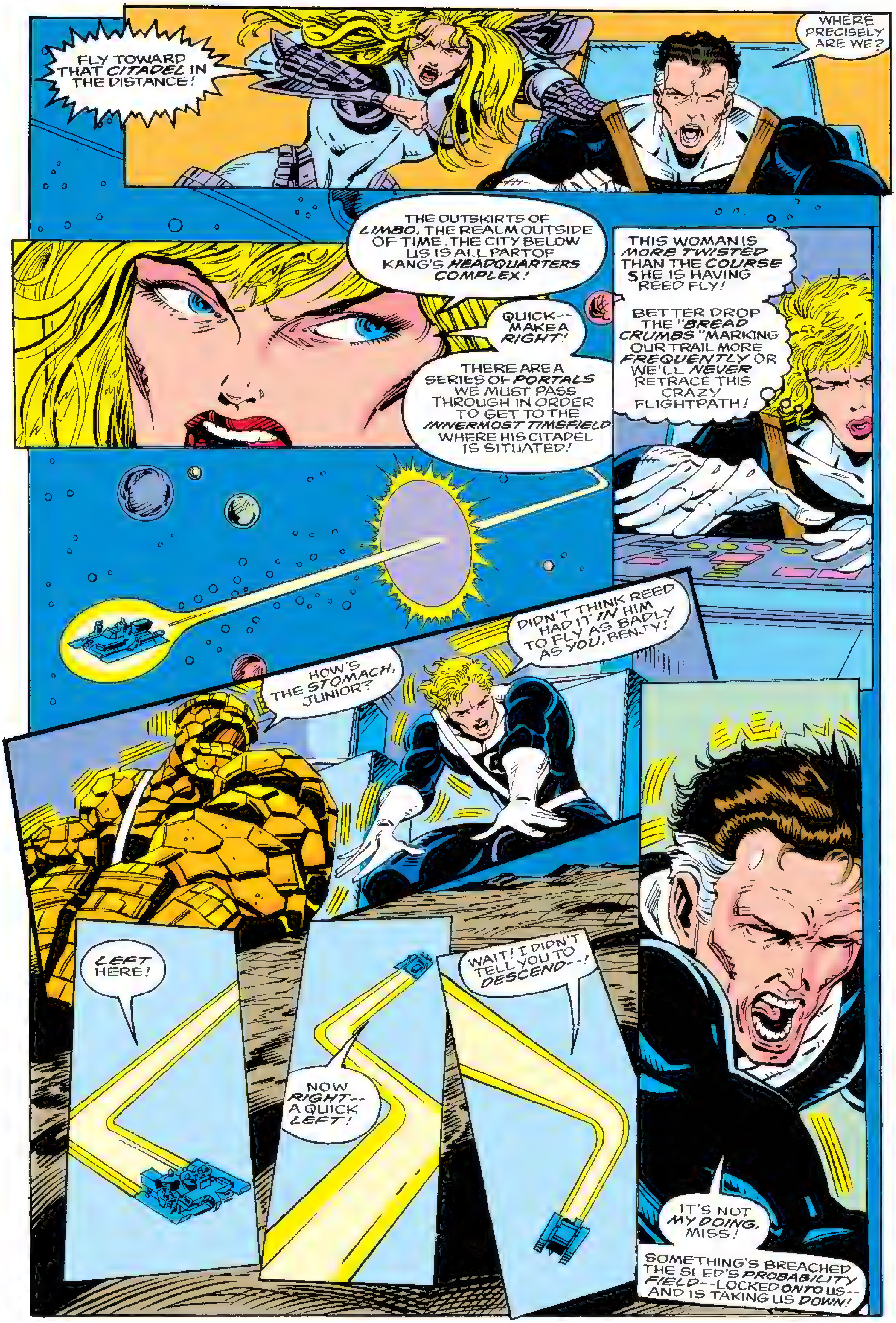

In less than a half hour, a singular craft launches from Four Freedoms Plaza, perhaps the most unusual vehicle the genius of Reed Richards has ever produced...
Its official name is Time Sled WS2000. But it's better known by the nickname Ben Grimm gave it on its maiden voyage--the Rosebud II.
Though not quite capable of breaking the sound barrier as it cleaves through the sky, it can shatter an even more formidable boundary--the time barrier. Equipped with the unique Kurtzberg Chronal Displacement Generator, the time sled can disengage itself from the relentless river of time and skip to other parts of the river...
HMM. IF EVEN HALF OF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, IT BEARS CHECKING OUT. WHAT DO YOU SAY, TEAM?
I SAY I DON'T TRUST THIS POOR MAN'S DOC STRANGE ANY FARTHER THAN MY AUNT PETUNIA COULD THROW 'IM!
IF THE FF CAN'T HANDLE THESE TWO, THE AVENGERS DON'T HAVE A CHANCE.
LET'S DO IT!
ROSEBUD II
OKAY, EVERYBODY, ATMOSPHERIC ENVELOPE'S UP. ESTIMATED FLIGHT TIME IS 97 MINUTES.
ROSEY'S NOT DESIGNED FOR AIR TRAVEL, REED. WANT ME TO PUT UP A MORE AERODYNAMIC FORCE FIELD?
EXCELLENT IDEA, DARLING.
REED WANTS ME TA KEEP AN EYE ON THIS TEMPTRESS BABE. AS IF I COULD KEEP MY PEEPERS OFF 'ER!
AH, HE'S JUST TRYIN' TA GIMME SOMETHIN' TA TAKE MY MIND OFF THE FACT I'M THE TEAM PILOT, BUT HE WON'T LET NOBODY BUT HIM TOUCH THE CONTROLS O' HIS PRECIOUS TOBOGGAN!

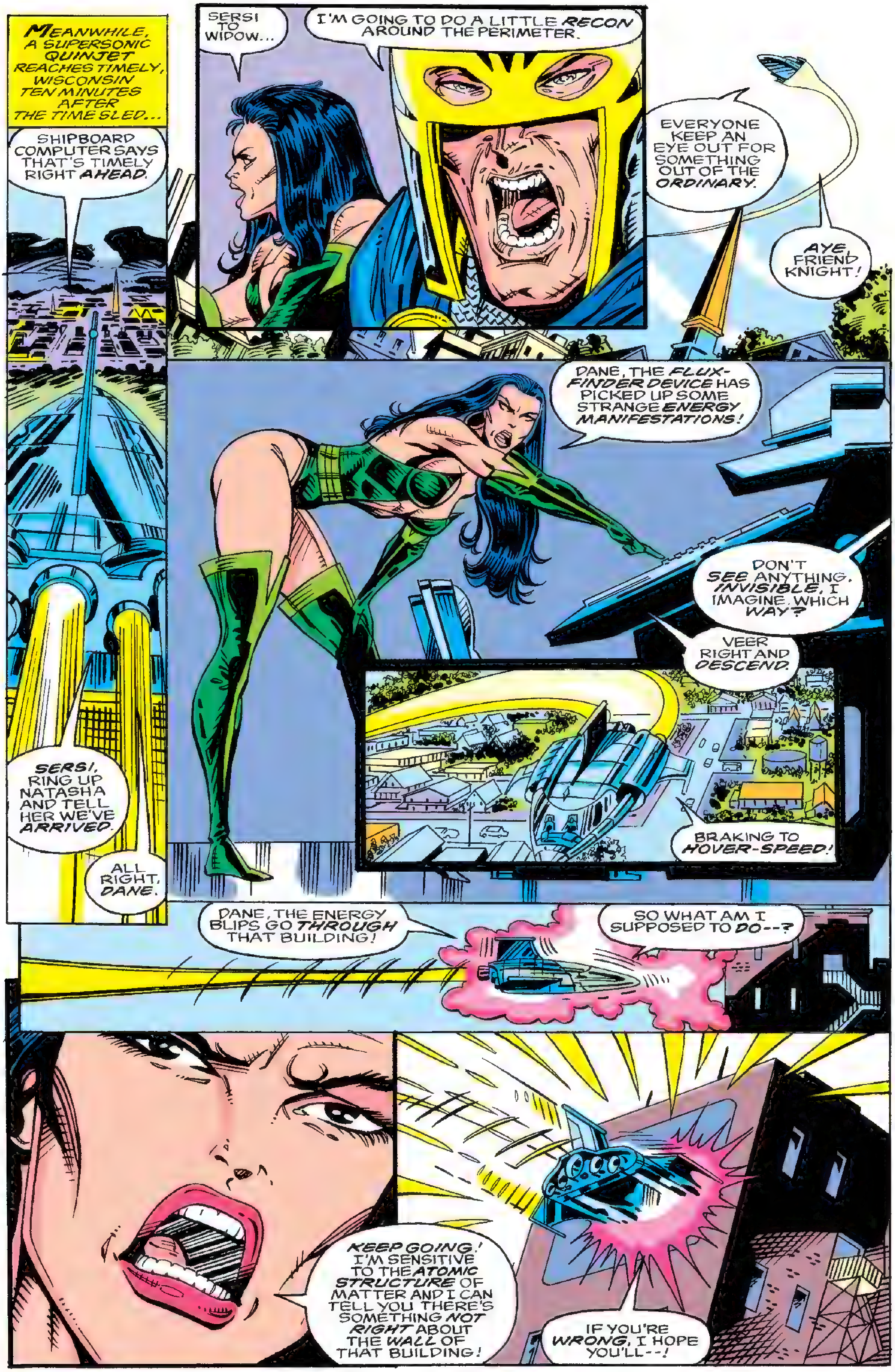

MEANWHILE, BACK IN MANHATTAN, AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD-RENOWNED AVENGERS, AN EMERGENCY SESSION OF THE ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP HAS BEEN CALLED...
DEPUTY LEADER BLACK WIDOW PRESIDING...
THREE AVENGERS ARE MISSING: VISION, CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THOR.
WE LOST CONTACT WITH EACH OF THEM IN THE VICINITY OF A SMALL TOWN IN WISCONSIN CALLED TIMELY.
VISION WAS THERE FIRST TO INVESTIGATE SOME CIRCUITRY FOUND IN HIS SYNTHETIC BODY WHICH HE BELIEVED WAS MANUFACTURED BY A COMPANY LOCATED THERE.
WHEN HIS COMMUNICARD CEASED TO SEND THE HOMING SIGNAL, CAPTAIN AMERICA CUT SHORT HIS LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO INVESTIGATE...
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? LET US HIE TO OUR LOST COMRADES' AID!
AND WHEN THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCES BEFELL HIM, I SENT THOR TO SEARCH FOR THEM. NOW HE'S MISSING, TOO.
NOT SO FAST, HERCULES! ANYTHING POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TAKE OUT THOSE THREE CERTAINLY DEMANDS THAT WE TAKE PRECAUTIONS.
CRYSTAL'S GOT A POINT. DO WE HAVE ANYTHING TO GO ON?
HAVE YOU RUN A TRACE ON THIS TOWN TO SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT IT?
ACCORDING TO OUR FILES, IT IS A ONE-INDUSTRY TOWN THAT WAS INCORPORATED IN 1900, SERSI. THAT INDUSTRY IS EXOTIC ELECTRONIC PARTS.
IT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PLACES TO MANUFACTURE LIGHT BULB FILAMENTS, DRY CELL BATTERIES, AND TRANSISTORS...
NOW IT MAKES MICROCHIPS, BIONIC SUB-SYSTEMS, AND PRINTED CIRCUITS, AMONG OTHER STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY.

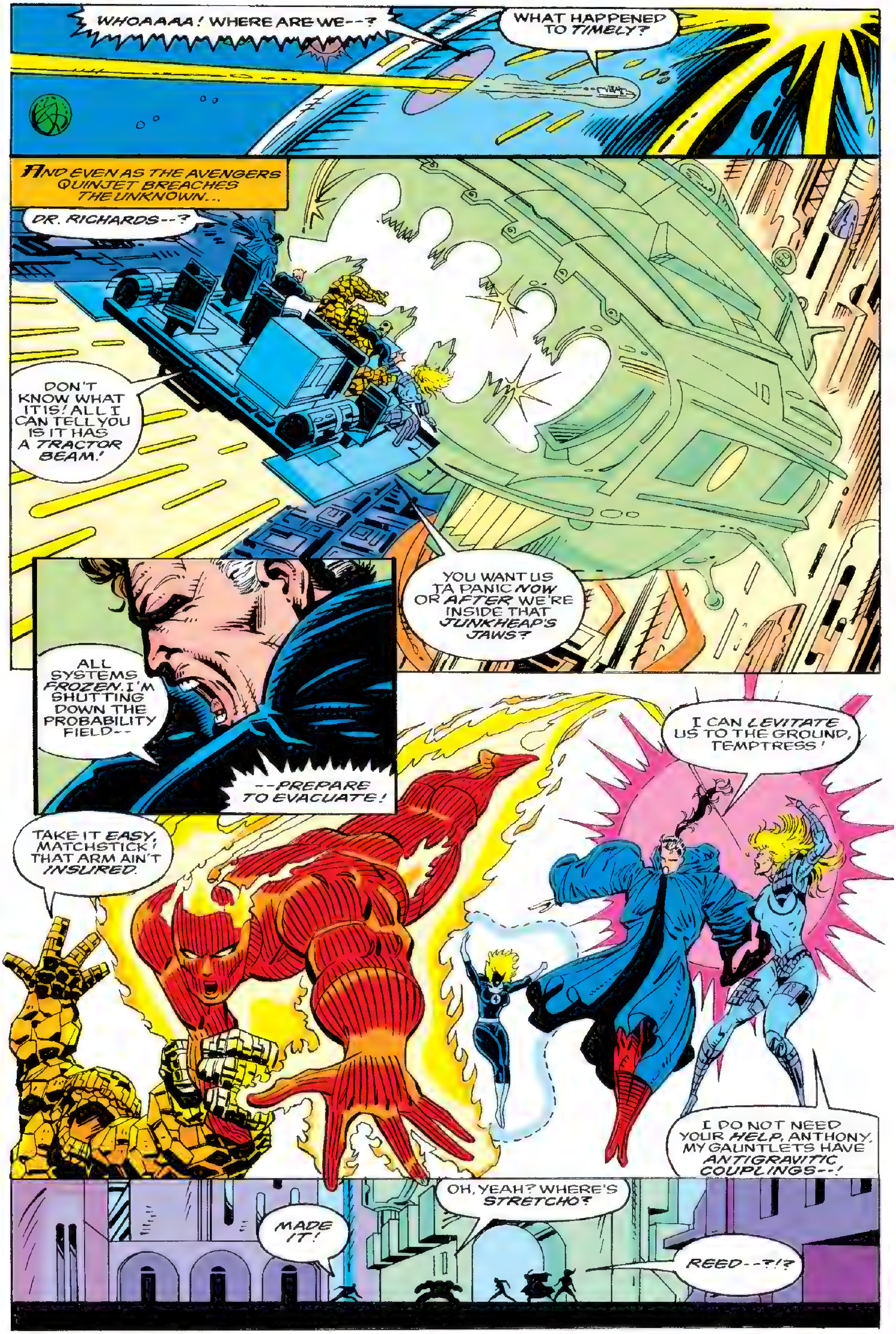
THE TIMELY INDUSTRIES FACTORY WAS THE *LAST PLACE* ANY OF THE THREE WENT BEFORE WE LOST CONTACT WITH THEM.
THAT'S *ALL* WE HAVE TO GO ON RIGHT NOW.
SO THAT'S THE *MISSION*. THE ONLY THING I CAN ADD IS PLEASE BE *CAREFUL* OUT THERE!
RIGHT, NATASHA!
AVENGERS ADVANCE
MINUTES LATER, FROM THE AVENGERS' LAUNCHING BAY, BENEATH THE EAST RIVER, A SILVERY QUINJET SCREAMS INTO THE AFTERNOON SKY...

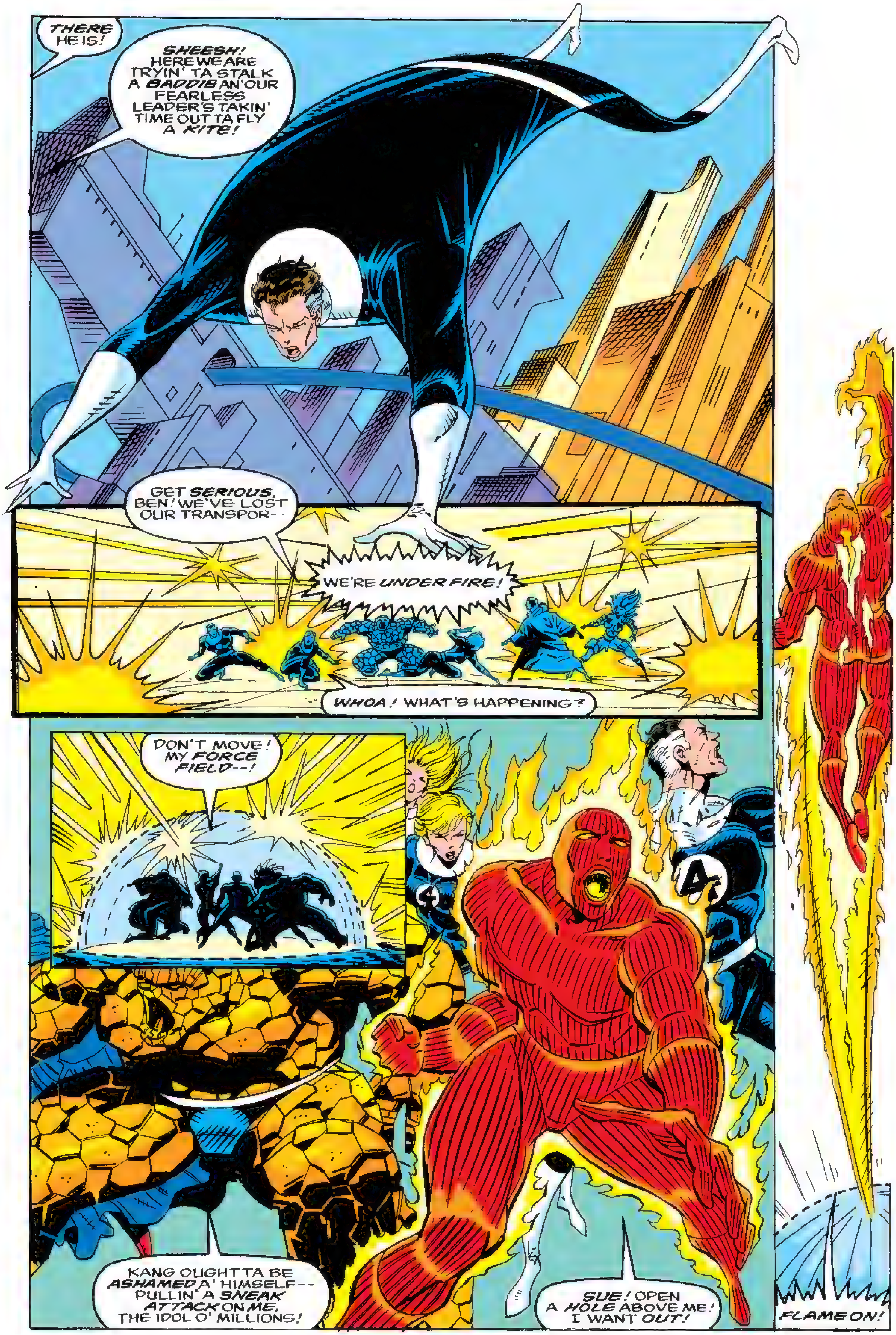

LATER, OVER WISCONSIN...
THAT'S *IT* UP AHEAD.
ROSEBUD III
WHA--? *THAT* RINKY-DINK BERG IS WHERE KANG'S GOT HIS *SUPER-DUPER HEADQUARTERS?*
SHEESH! NO WONDER THIS GUY NEVER MADE IT INTO *DOC DOOM'S BOWLIN' LEAGUE!*
QUIET, BEN. ONBOARD SENSORS DETECT A FAINT RESIDUE OF AN *UNIDENTIFIED ENERGY.*
AND ACCORDING TO THE MAP, THE TOWN'S NAME IS *TIMELY!*
INTERESTING! I BUY CERTAIN ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS FROM *TIMELY INDUSTRIES.*
IN FACT I USED SOME IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS *VERY SLED!*
RICHARDS! I'VE DETECTED A HIDDEN *TIME APERTURE*--AN ACCESS POINT INTO *KANG'S CITADEL!*
FLY THIS VEHICLE INTO THAT *SIGN* ON THAT BUILDING!
OMEGA MOV & STORAGE
WE TAKE YOU ANYWHERE!
YOU WANT ME TO FLY INTO THAT *BRICK WALL?*
YES--IT IS A *HOLOGRAM*--NOT WHAT IT APPEARS.
I DO NOT *TRUST* OUR GUIDE. ONCE WE GET INSIDE KANG'S DOMAIN, SHE MAY WELL *ABANDON* US. I'M GOING TO LEAVE A *TRAIL OF INVISIBLE MARKERS* FOR US TO FOLLOW ON OUR WAY OUT!

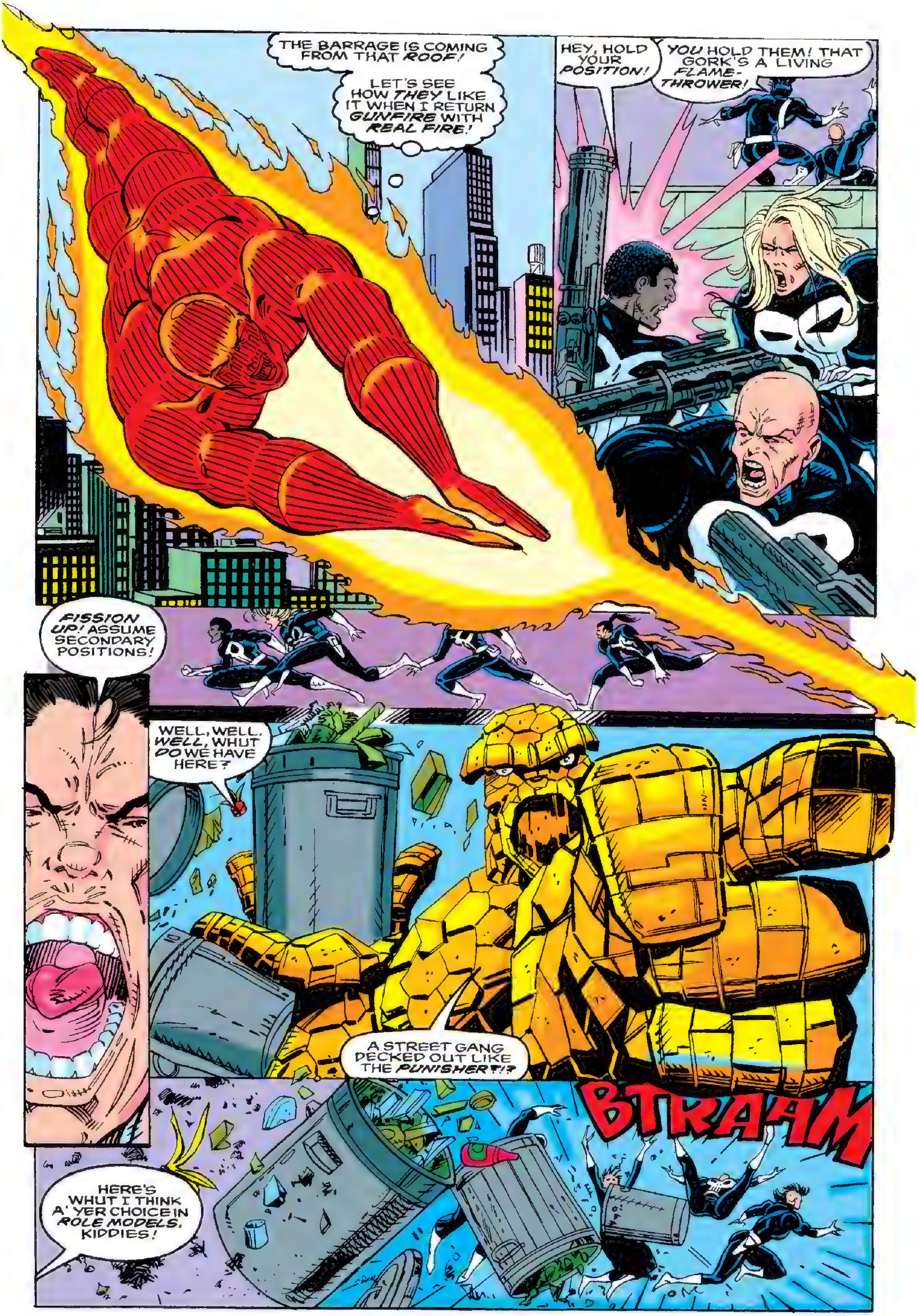

FIFTEEN FEET FROM *IMPACT*... FLIGHT SPEED *FIVE MILES AN HOUR.*
LADY--IF YER *WRONG* ABOUT THIS--!
YOU THINK I WOULD MOUNT SO ELABORATE A SCHEME JUST TO CRASH US INTO A *WALL?*
FIVE FEET... *IMPACT!*
WE'RE--
--*PASSING THROUGH!*
PROBABILITY FIELD ENGAGED AUTOMATICALLY--WE'RE MOVING THROUGH *TIME!*
SEE--I *TOLD* YOU--!
SKREE
SK
HOOO*HAH!* WE NEARLY GOT A FLOCK O' *PTERODACTYLS* SMEARED 'CROSS OUR WINDSHIELD!
IN POINT OF *FACT,* BEN--WE DON'T *HAVE* A WINDSHIELD AND THOSE LOOKED LIKE *PTERONDONS* TO ME. PTERODACTYLS HAVE...
SHADDUP AN' *DRIVE,* STRETCHO.
REED--ON THE LEFT--A *SUPER-CITY!*

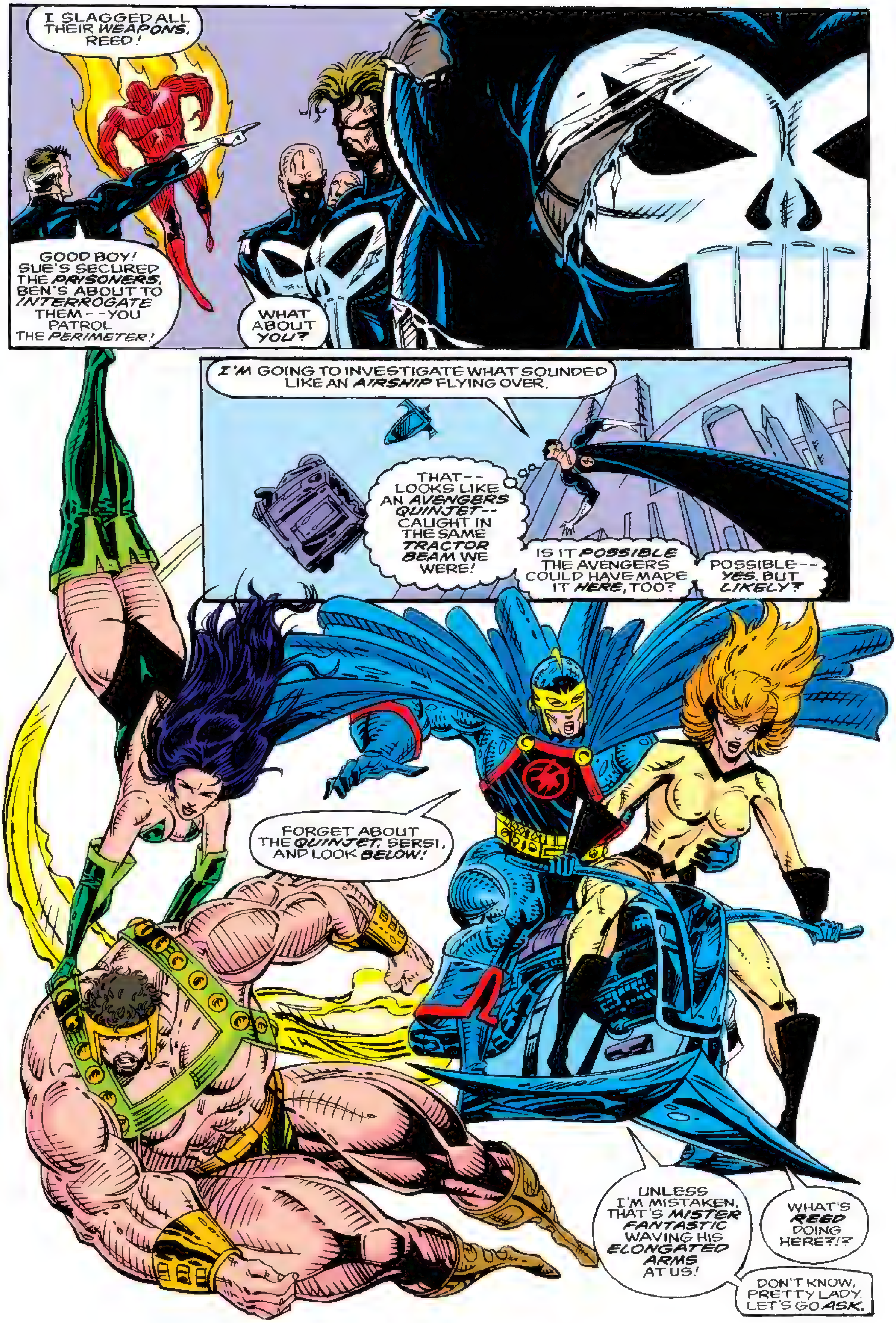

FLY TOWARD THAT *CITADEL* IN THE DISTANCE!
WHERE PRECISELY ARE WE?
THE OUTSKIRTS OF *LIMBO*, THE REALM OUTSIDE OF TIME. THE CITY BELOW US IS ALL PART OF KANG'S *HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX!*
QUICK--MAKE A *RIGHT!*
THERE ARE A SERIES OF *PORTALS* WE MUST PASS THROUGH IN ORDER TO GET TO THE *INNERMOST TIMEFIELD* WHERE HIS CITADEL IS SITUATED!
THIS WOMAN IS *MORE TWISTED* THAN THE *COURSE* SHE IS HAVING REED FLY!
BETTER DROP THE *"BREAD CRUMBS"* MARKING OUR TRAIL MORE *FREQUENTLY* OR WE'LL *NEVER* RETRACE THIS CRAZY FLIGHTPATH!
HOW'S THE *STOMACH*, JUNIOR?
DIDN'T THINK REED HAD IT *IN* HIM TO FLY AS BADLY AS *YOU*, BENJY!
LEFT HERE!
NOW *RIGHT*--A QUICK *LEFT!*
WAIT! I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO *DESCEND*--!
IT'S NOT *MY DOING*, MISS!
SOMETHING'S BREACHED THE SLED'S *PROBABILITY FIELD*--LOCKED *ONTO* US--AND IS TAKING US *DOWN!*

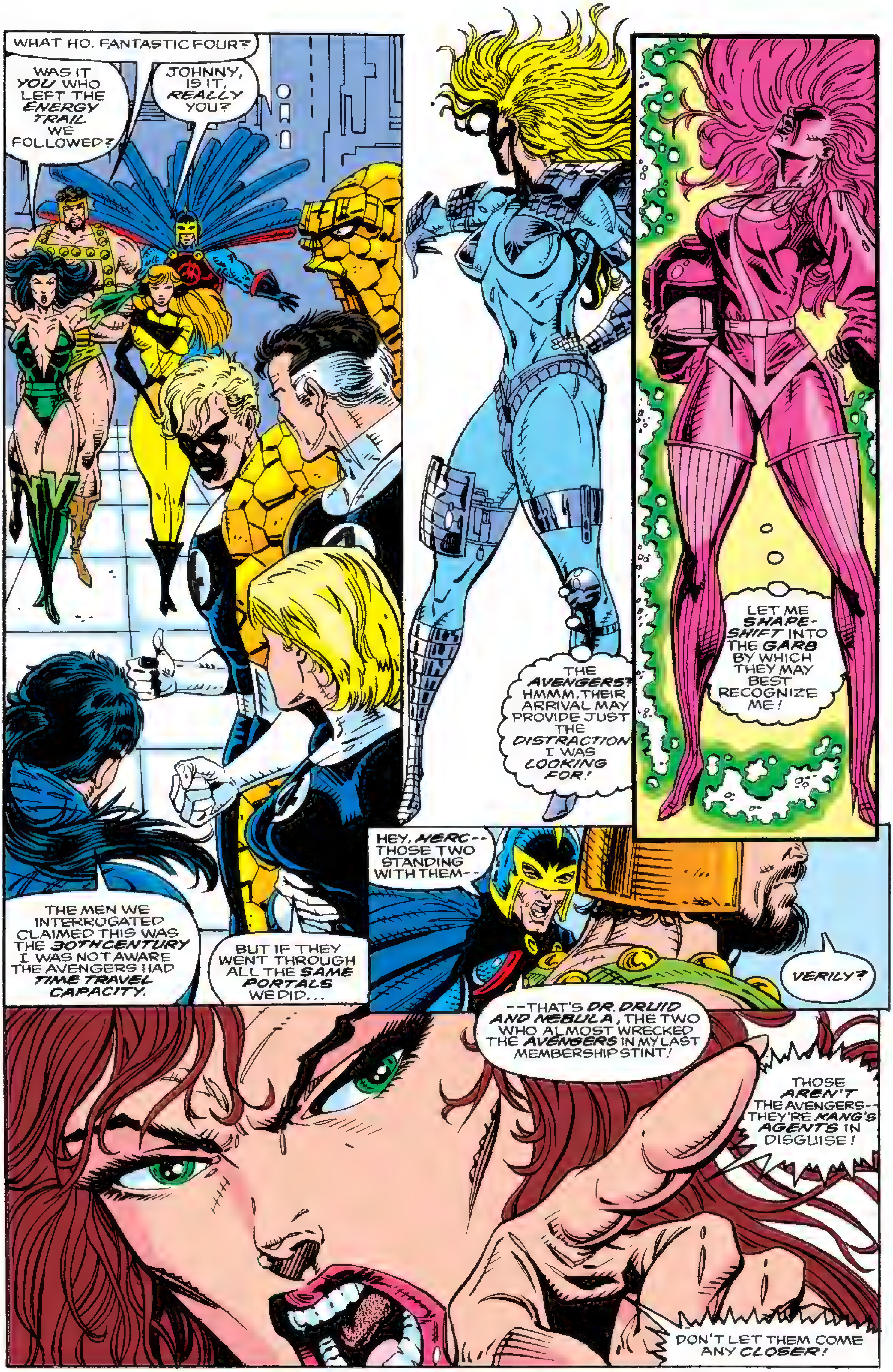

MEANWHILE, A SUPERSONIC QUINJET REACHES TIMELY, WISCONSIN TEN MINUTES AFTER THE TIME SLED...
SHIPBOARD COMPUTER SAYS THAT'S TIMELY RIGHT AHEAD.
SERSI, RING UP NATASHA AND TELL HER WE'VE ARRIVED.
ALL RIGHT, DANE.
SERSI TO WIDOW...
I'M GOING TO DO A LITTLE RECON AROUND THE PERIMETER.
EVERYONE KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY.
AYE, FRIEND KNIGHT!
DANE, THE FLUX-FINDER DEVICE HAS PICKED UP SOME STRANGE ENERGY MANIFESTATIONS!
DON'T SEE ANYTHING. INVISIBLE, I IMAGINE. WHICH WAY?
VEER RIGHT AND DESCEND.
BRAKING TO HOVER-SPEED!
DANE, THE ENERGY BLIPS GO THROUGH THAT BUILDING!
SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO--?
KEEP GOING! I'M SENSITIVE TO THE ATOMIC STRUCTURE OF MATTER AND I CAN TELL YOU THERE'S SOMETHING NOT RIGHT ABOUT THE WALL OF THAT BUILDING!
IF YOU'RE WRONG, I HOPE YOU'LL--!

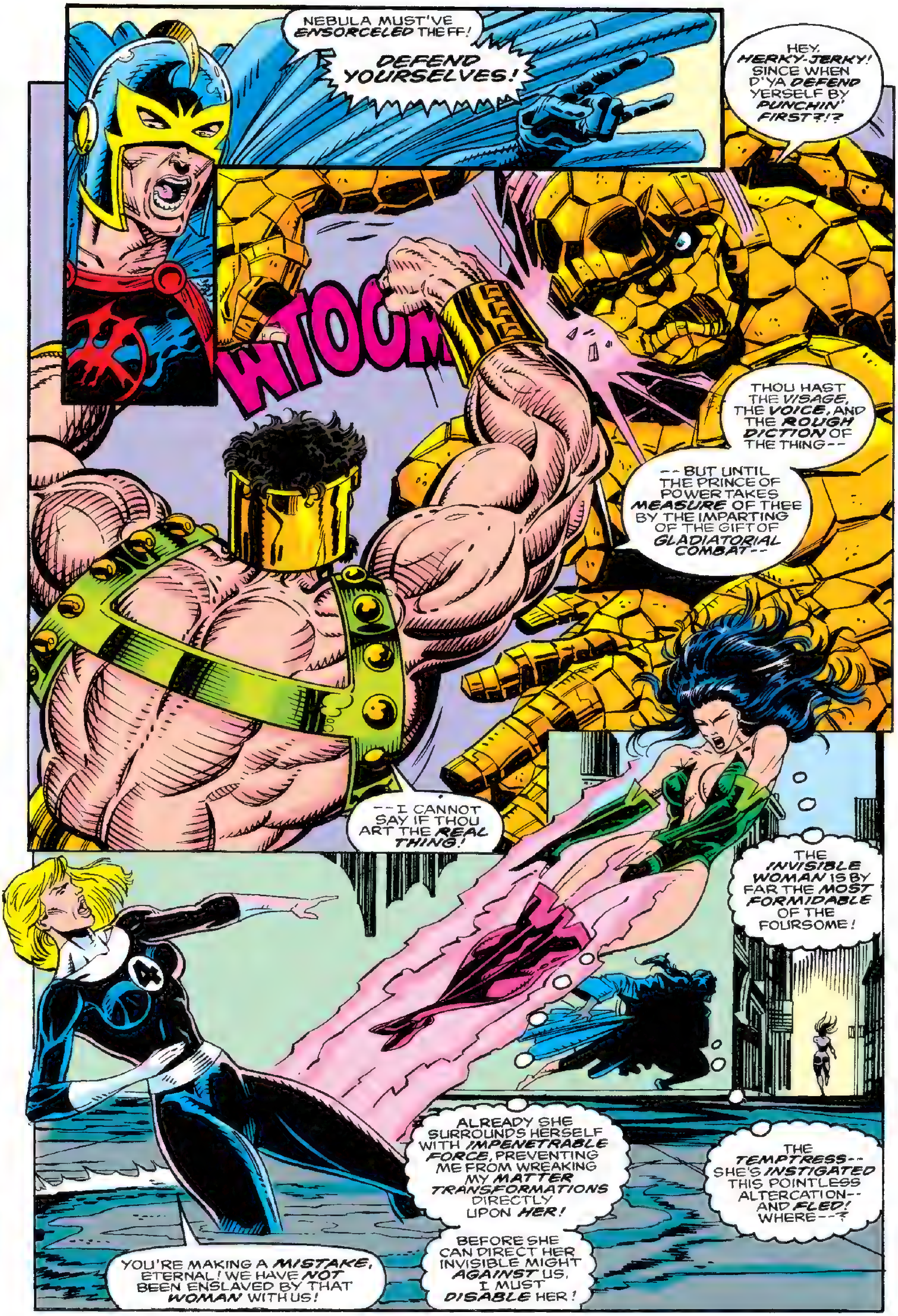

WHOAAAA! WHERE ARE WE--?
WHAT HAPPENED TO TIMELY?
AND EVEN AS THE AVENGERS QUINJET BREACHES THE UNKNOWN...
DR. RICHARDS--?
DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS! ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS IT HAS A TRACTOR BEAM!
YOU WANT US TA PANIC NOW OR AFTER WE'RE INSIDE THAT JUNKHEAP'S JAWS?
ALL SYSTEMS FROZEN. I'M SHUTTING DOWN THE PROBABILITY FIELD--
--PREPARE TO EVACUATE!
I CAN LEVITATE US TO THE GROUND, TEMPTRESS!
TAKE IT EASY, MATCHSTICK! THAT ARM AIN'T INSURED.
I DO NOT NEED YOUR HELP, ANTHONY. MY GAUNTLETS HAVE ANTIGRAVITIC COUPLINGS--!
MADE IT!
OH, YEAH? WHERE'S STRETCHO?
REED--?!?

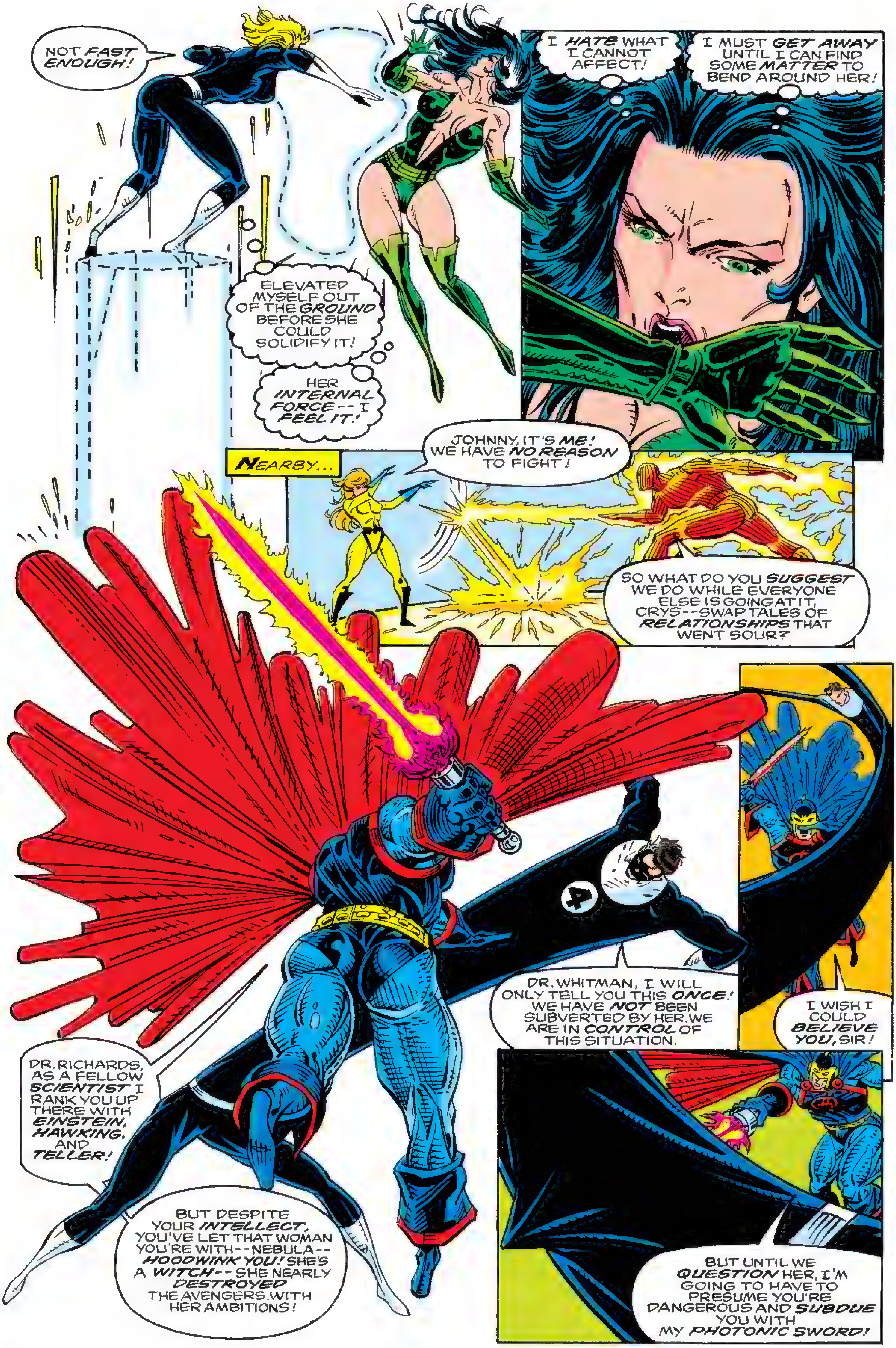

THERE HE IS!
SHEESH! HERE WE ARE TRYIN' TA STALK A BADDIE AN' OUR FEARLESS LEADER'S TAKIN' TIME OUT TA FLY A KITE!
GET SERIOUS, BEN! WE'VE LOST OUR TRANSPOR--
WE'RE UNDER FIRE!
WHOA! WHAT'S HAPPENING?
DON'T MOVE! MY FORCE FIELD--!
KANG OUGHTTA BE ASHAMED A' HIMSELF-- PULLIN' A SNEAK ATTACK ON ME, THE IDOL O' MILLIONS!
SUE! OPEN A HOLE ABOVE ME! I WANT OUT!
FLAME ON!


THE BARRAGE IS COMING FROM THAT *ROOF!*
LET'S SEE HOW *THEY* LIKE IT WHEN I RETURN *GUNFIRE* WITH *REAL FIRE!*
HEY, HOLD YOUR *POSITION!*
YOU HOLD THEM! THAT GORK'S A LIVING *FLAME-THROWER!*
FISSION UP! ASSUME SECONDARY POSITIONS!
WELL, WELL, *WELL*, WHUT *DO* WE HAVE HERE?
A STREET GANG DECKED OUT LIKE THE *PUNISHER*!?
BTRAAM
HERE'S WHUT I THINK A' YER CHOICE IN *ROLE MODELS*, KIDDIES!


I SLAGGED ALL THEIR *WEAPONS*, REED!
GOOD BOY! SUE'S SECURED THE *PRISONERS*, BEN'S ABOUT TO *INTERROGATE* THEM--YOU PATROL THE *PERIMETER*!
WHAT ABOUT *YOU?*
I'M GOING TO INVESTIGATE WHAT SOUNDED LIKE AN *AIRSHIP* FLYING OVER.
THAT--LOOKS LIKE AN *AVENGERS QUINJET*--CAUGHT IN THE SAME *TRACTOR BEAM* WE WERE!
IS IT *POSSIBLE* THE AVENGERS COULD HAVE MADE IT *HERE*, TOO?
POSSIBLE--*YES*. BUT *LIKELY?*
FORGET ABOUT THE *QUINJET*, SERSI, AND LOOK *BELOW!*
UNLESS I'M MISTAKEN, THAT'S *MISTER FANTASTIC* WAVING HIS *ELONGATED ARMS* AT US!
WHAT'S *REED* DOING HERE?!?
DON'T KNOW, PRETTY LADY. LET'S GO *ASK*.

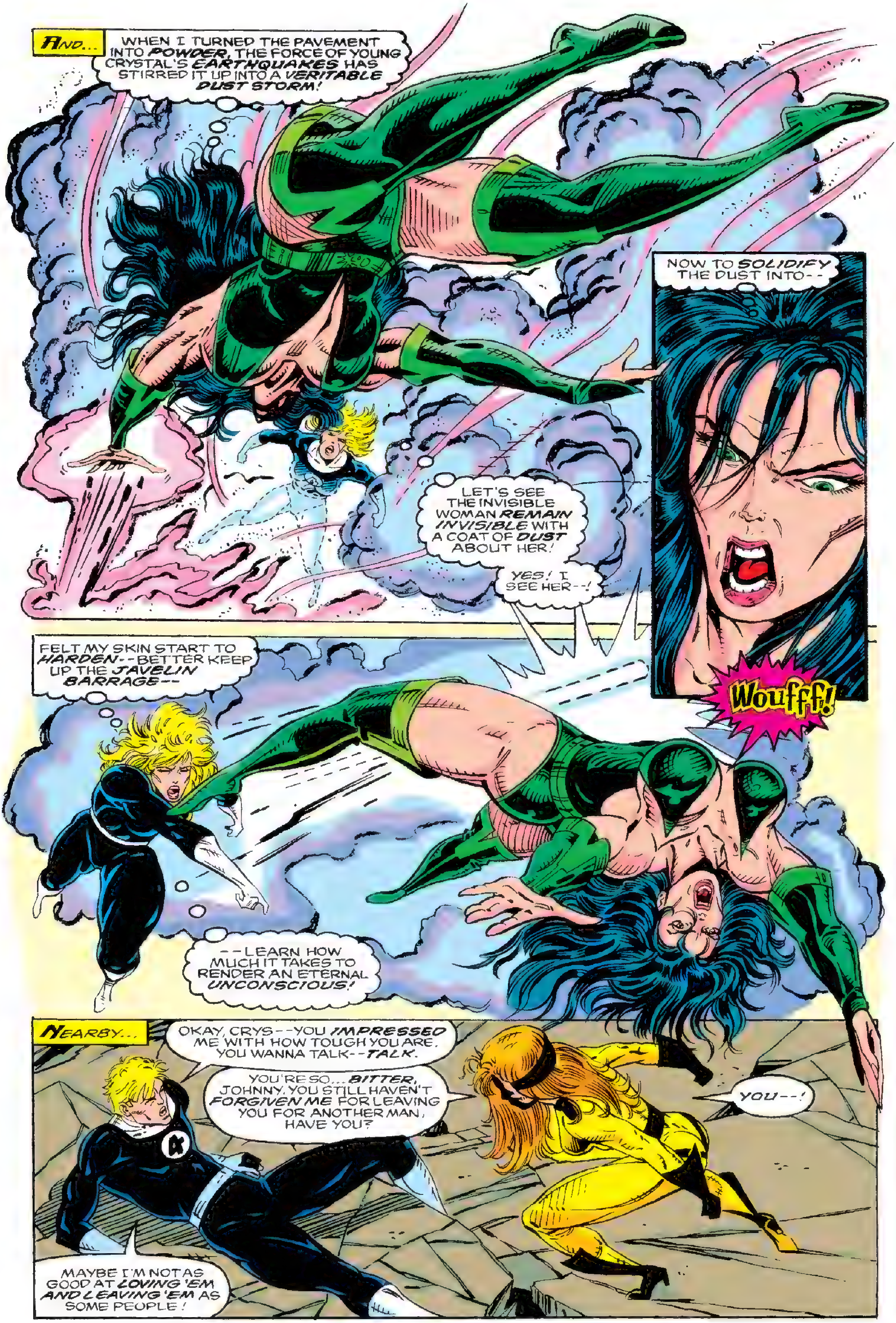

WHAT HO, FANTASTIC FOUR?
WAS IT *YOU* WHO LEFT THE *ENERGY TRAIL* WE FOLLOWED?
JOHNNY, IS IT, *REALLY* YOU?
THE MEN WE INTERROGATED CLAIMED THIS WAS THE *30TH CENTURY* I WAS NOT AWARE THE AVENGERS HAD *TIME TRAVEL CAPACITY.*
BUT IF THEY WENT THROUGH ALL THE *SAME PORTALS* WE DID...
THE *AVENGERS?* HMMM, THEIR ARRIVAL MAY PROVIDE JUST THE *DISTRACTION* I WAS *LOOKING FOR!*
LET ME *SHAPE-SHIFT* INTO THE *GARB* BY WHICH THEY MAY BEST RECOGNIZE ME!
HEY, *HERC*-- THOSE TWO STANDING WITH THEM--
--THAT'S *DR. DRUID AND NEBULA*, THE TWO WHO ALMOST WRECKED THE *AVENGERS* IN MY LAST MEMBERSHIP STINT!
VERILY?
THOSE *AREN'T* THE AVENGERS-- THEY'RE *KANG'S AGENTS* IN DISGUISE!
DON'T LET THEM COME ANY *CLOSER!*

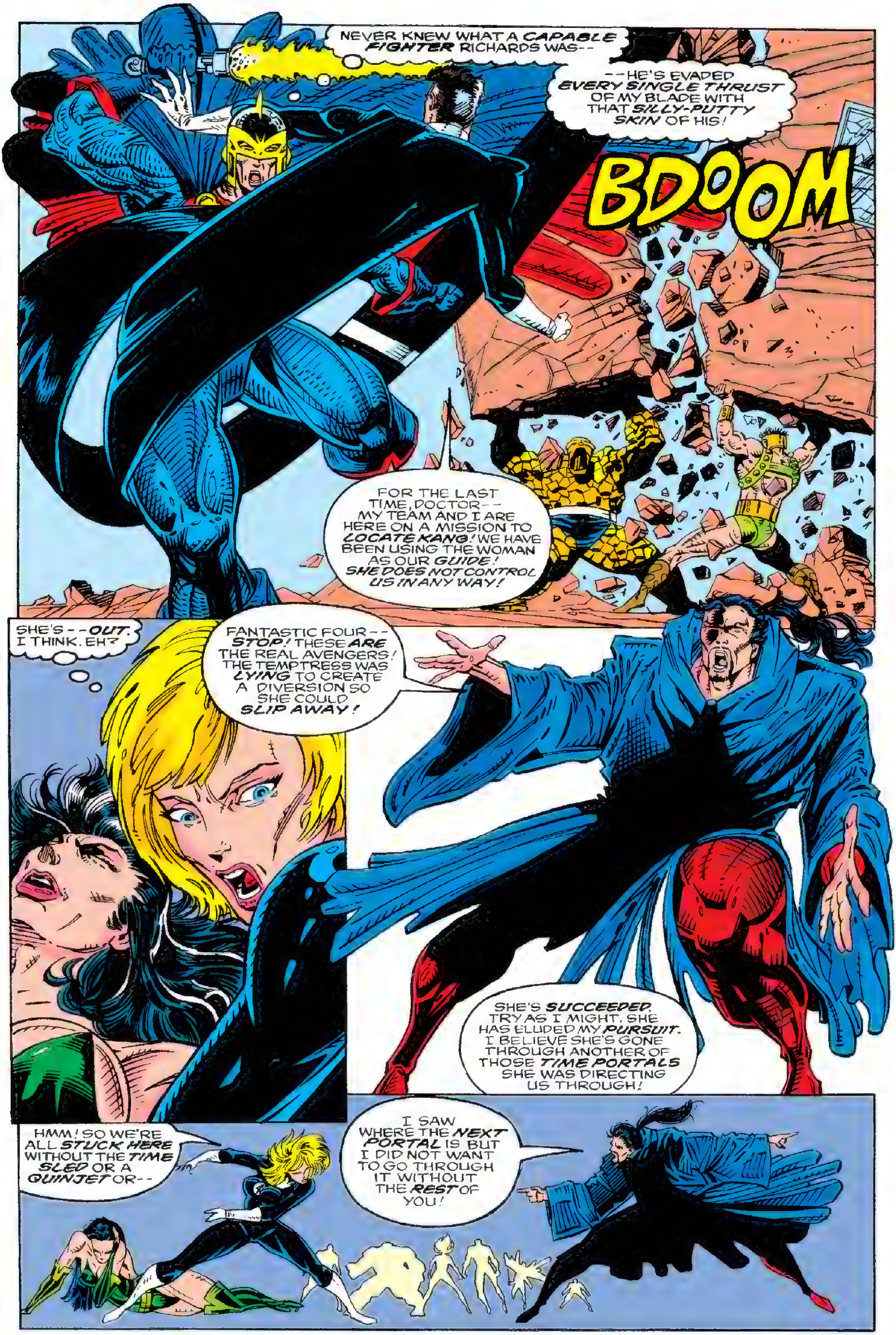

NEBULA MUST'VE *ENSORCELED* THE FF!
DEFEND YOURSELVES!
HEY, *HERKY-JERKY!* SINCE WHEN D'YA *DEFEND* YERSELF BY *PUNCHIN' FIRST?!?*
WHTOOM
THOU HAST THE *VISAGE*, THE *VOICE*, AND THE *ROUGH DICTION* OF THE THING--
--BUT UNTIL THE PRINCE OF POWER TAKES *MEASURE* OF THEE BY THE IMPARTING OF THE GIFT OF *GLADIATORIAL COMBAT*--
--I CANNOT SAY IF THOU ART THE *REAL THING!*
THE *INVISIBLE WOMAN* IS BY FAR THE *MOST FORMIDABLE* OF THE FOURSOME!
ALREADY SHE SURROUNDS HERSELF WITH *IMPENETRABLE FORCE*, PREVENTING ME FROM WREAKING MY *MATTER TRANSFORMATIONS* DIRECTLY UPON *HER!*
THE *TEMPTRESS*-- SHE'S *INSTIGATED* THIS POINTLESS ALTERCATION-- AND *FLED!* WHERE--?
YOU'RE MAKING A *MISTAKE*, ETERNAL! WE HAVE *NOT* BEEN ENSLAVED BY THAT *WOMAN* WITH US!
BEFORE SHE CAN DIRECT HER INVISIBLE MIGHT *AGAINST* US, I MUST *DISABLE* HER!

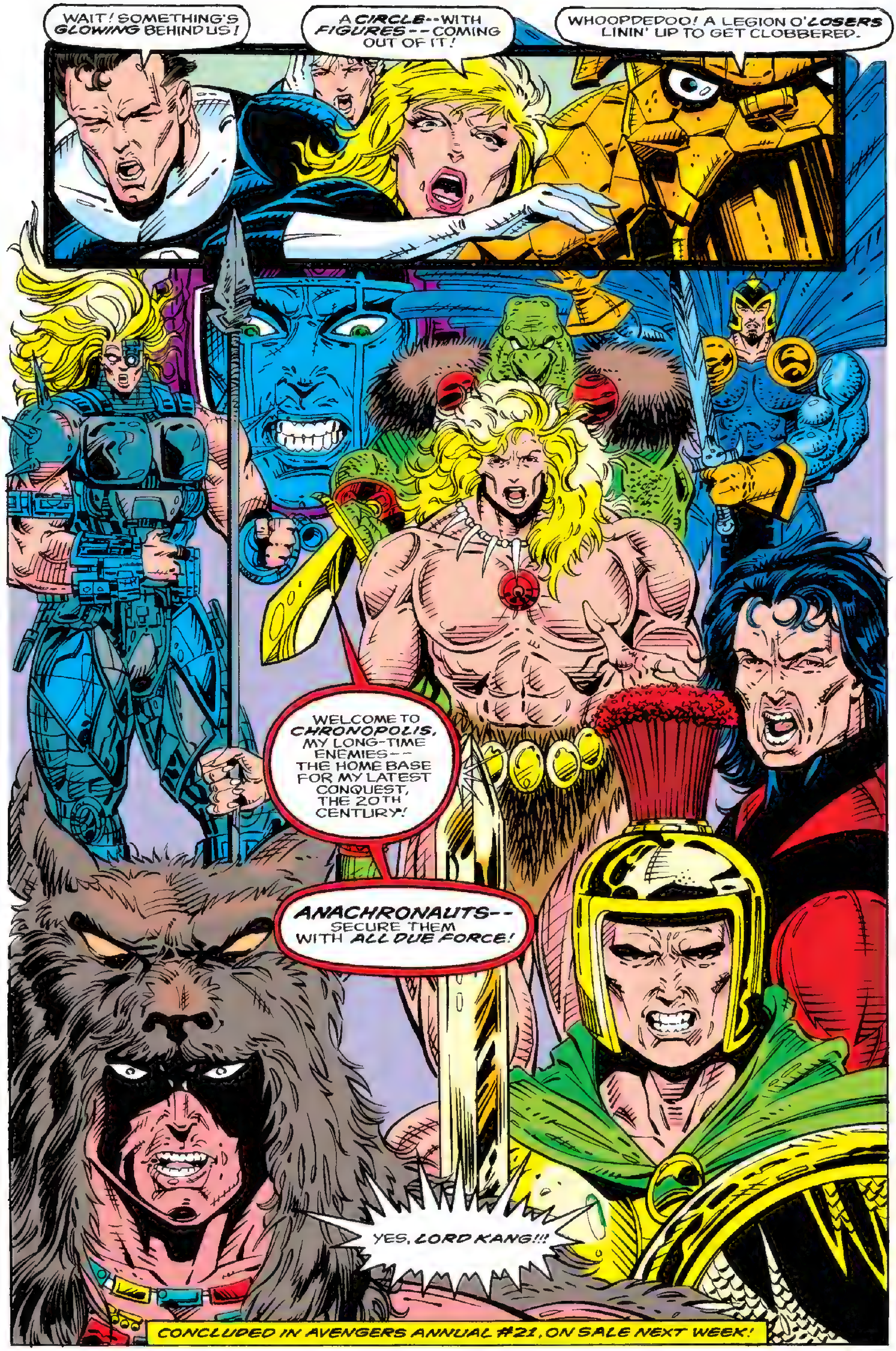

NOT FAST ENOUGH!
ELEVATED MYSELF OUT OF THE GROUND BEFORE SHE COULD SOLIDIFY IT!
HER INTERNAL FORCE--I FEEL IT!
I HATE WHAT I CANNOT AFFECT!
I MUST GET AWAY UNTIL I CAN FIND SOME MATTER TO BEND AROUND HER!
NEARBY...
JOHNNY, IT'S ME! WE HAVE NO REASON TO FIGHT!
SO WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO WHILE EVERYONE ELSE IS GOING AT IT, CRYS--SWAP TALES OF RELATIONSHIPS THAT WENT SOUR?
DR. RICHARDS, AS A FELLOW SCIENTIST I RANK YOU UP THERE WITH EINSTEIN, HAWKING, AND TELLER!
BUT DESPITE YOUR INTELLECT, YOU'VE LET THAT WOMAN YOU'RE WITH--NEBULA--HOODWINK YOU! SHE'S A WITCH--SHE NEARLY DESTROYED THE AVENGERS WITH HER AMBITIONS!
DR. WHITMAN, I WILL ONLY TELL YOU THIS ONCE! WE HAVE NOT BEEN SUBVERTED BY HER. WE ARE IN CONTROL OF THIS SITUATION.
I WISH I COULD BELIEVE YOU, SIR!
BUT UNTIL WE QUESTION HER, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO PRESUME YOU'RE DANGEROUS AND SUBDUE YOU WITH MY PHOTONIC SWORD!

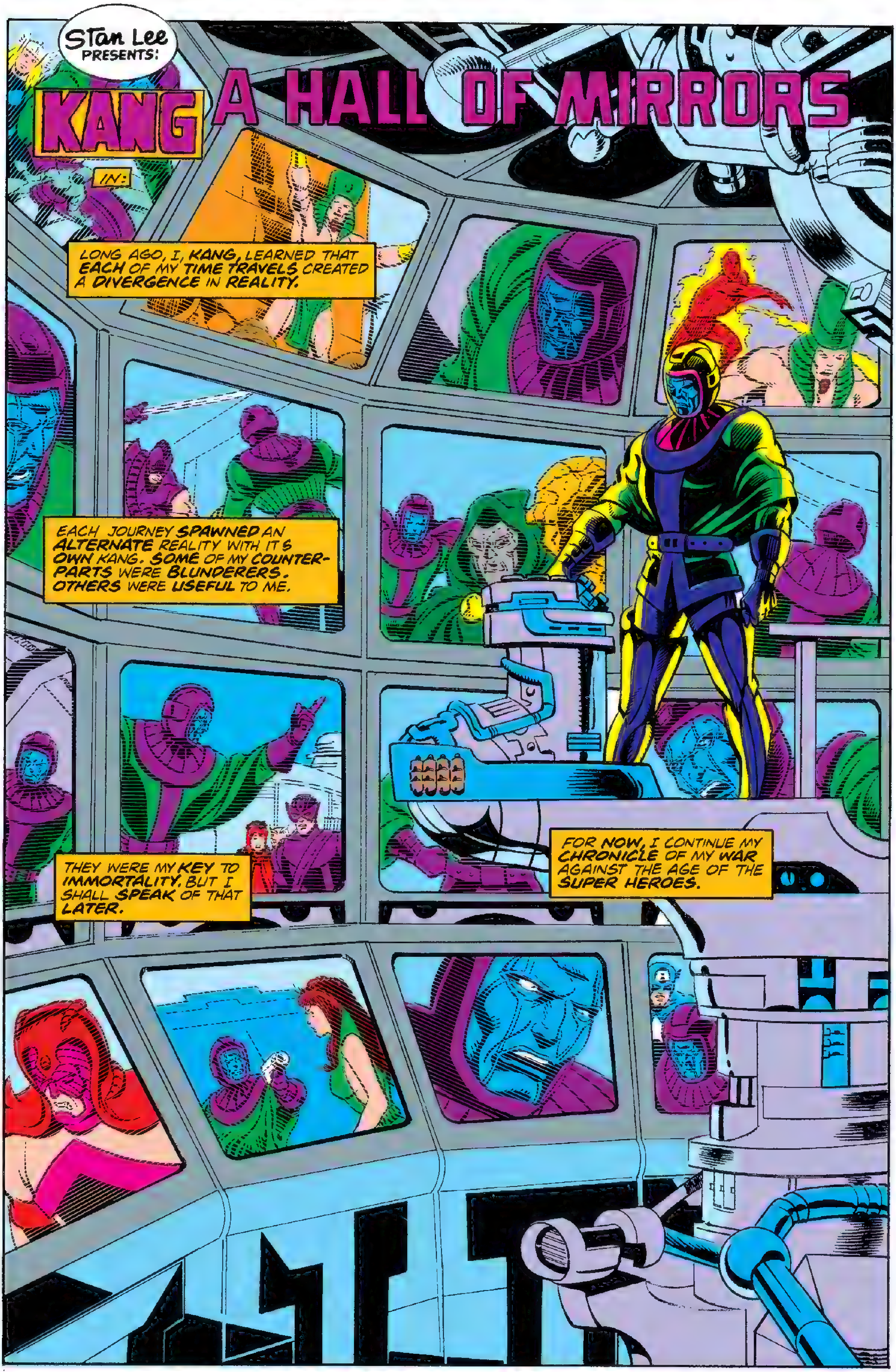
ELSEWHERE...
YA KNOW, HERC, YOU'RE TOO FULL O' YERSELF BY HALF!
TWO MINUTES WITH YOU AN' IT'S NO MYSTERY WHY FOLKS STOPPED WORSHIPPIN' YOU ANCIENT GREEKS!
IN FACT, IF I WERE TO TAKE A POLL, BETCHA YOU'D BE VOTED MOST POMPOUS GOD ON EARTH!
TILL I DO, HERE'S ANOTHER POLE YA MAY ENJOY!
NEARBY...
MY OPPONENT'S VANISHED ON ME!
I KNOW SHE MUST BE--
OH!
SERSI SEEMED TO BE ABLE TO SHRUG OFF MY FORCE-SPHERE BOMBARDMENT--
--LET'S SEE HOW SHE RESPONDS TO A GOOD OLD FASHIONED BOOTHEEL!

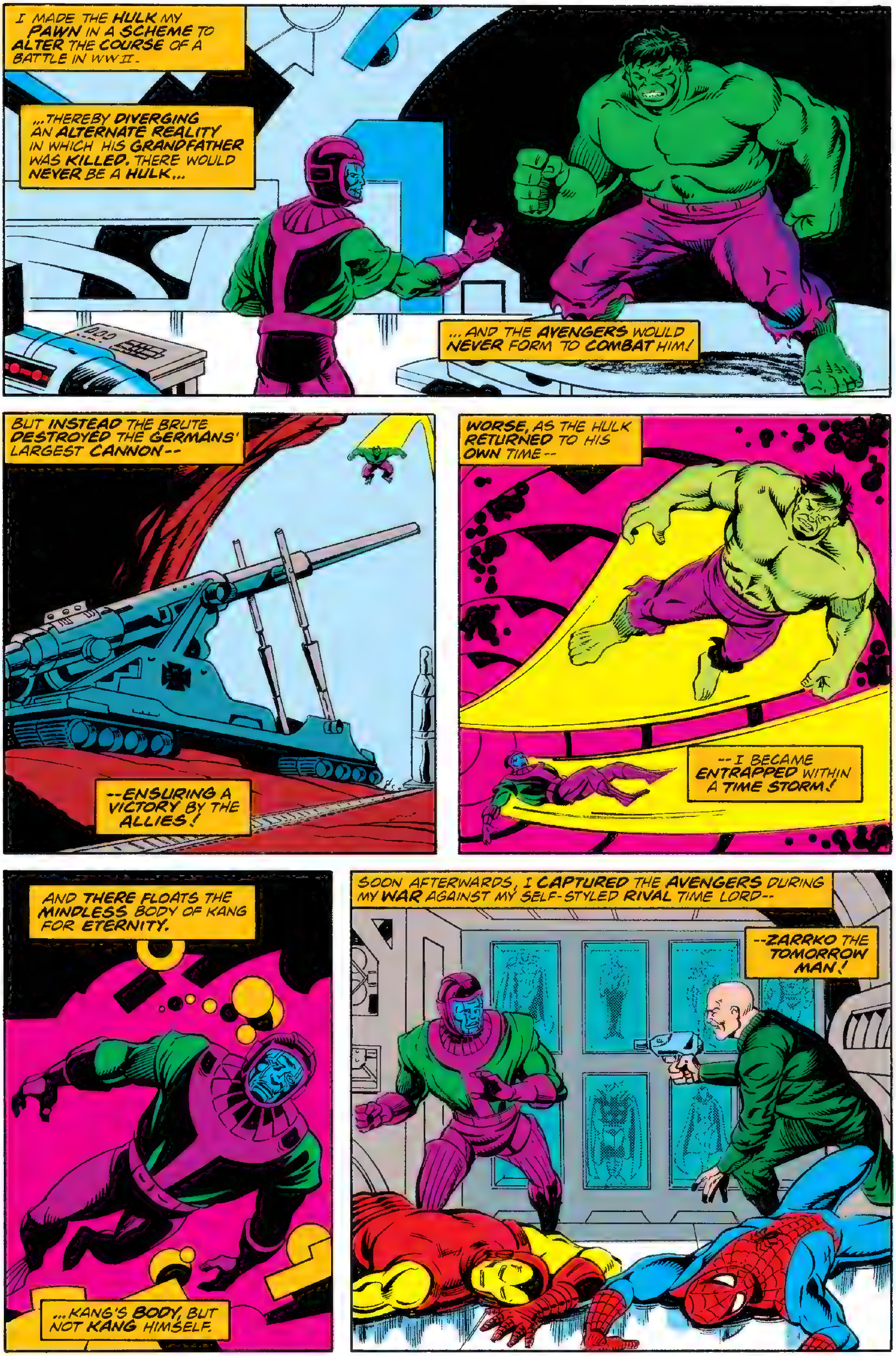
THIS HAS GONE *FAR ENOUGH,* JOHNNY!
SHE BURST AN UNDERGROUND *WATER MAIN* WITH HER ELEMENTAL POWERS!
OKAY, CRYSTAL-- MY FLAME'S *OUT!* COOL IT WITH THE GROUND-BUSTING ALREADY! I'M *ALL EARS!*
I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN *THAT,* JOHNNY STORM!
IN TEN SECONDS YOUR *BODY'S HEAT* WILL HAVE EVAPORATED THE *MOISTURE* AND YOU'LL BE UP TO YOUR OLD *FLAME TRICKS.*
YOU'RE GOING TO *STOP* TRYING TO INTIMIDATE ME--AND *LISTEN!*
RRRRRRMMMMM
NEARBY...
BENJAMIN GRIMM, I FORGIVE THEE THY *IMPERTINENCE* SINCE THOU ART OBVIOUSLY UNDER THE KANG WOMAN'S *MENTAL DOMINATION*--
--BUT I STILL INTEND TO *SMITE THEE* TILL THOU DOST *RENOUNCE* THE MISAPPREHENSIONS THOU DOST SEEM TO HAVE ABOUT ME!
PERCHANCE A CLOSE EXAMINATION OF THE *WORKMANSHIP* OF THIS ERA'S *MOTORIZED CONVEYANCES* MAY CLEAR THY *HEAD!*
BDRAASH

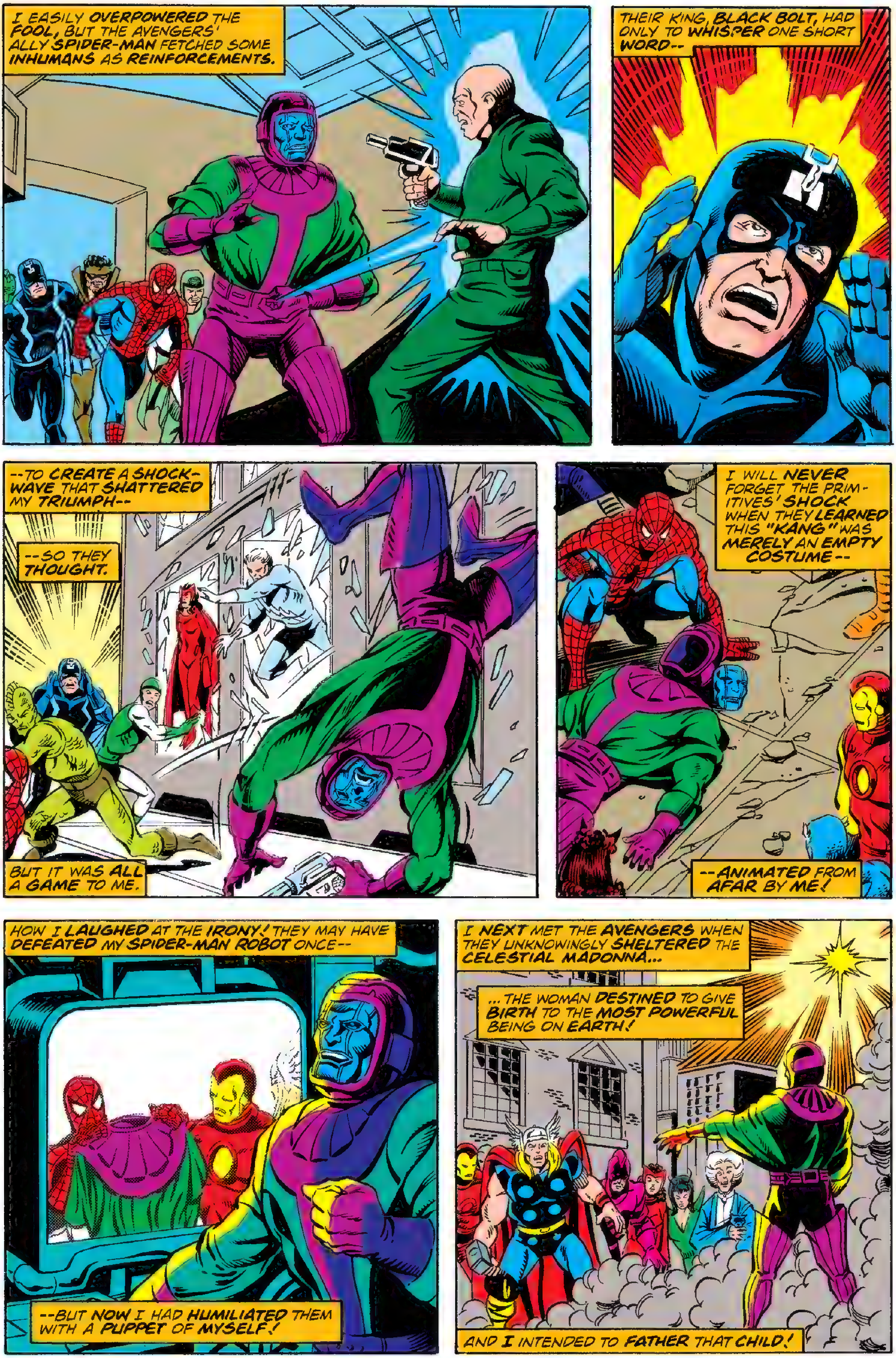

AND...
WHEN I TURNED THE PAVEMENT INTO POWDER, THE FORCE OF YOUNG CRYSTAL'S EARTHQUAKES HAS STIRRED IT UP INTO A VERITABLE DUST STORM!
LET'S SEE THE INVISIBLE WOMAN REMAIN INVISIBLE WITH A COAT OF DUST ABOUT HER!
YES! I SEE HER--!
NOW TO SOLIDIFY THE DUST INTO--
Woufff!
FELT MY SKIN START TO HARDEN--BETTER KEEP UP THE JAVELIN BARRAGE--
--LEARN HOW MUCH IT TAKES TO RENDER AN ETERNAL UNCONSCIOUS!
NEARBY...
OKAY, CRYS--YOU IMPRESSED ME WITH HOW TOUGH YOU ARE. YOU WANNA TALK--TALK.
YOU'RE SO... BITTER, JOHNNY. YOU STILL HAVEN'T FORGIVEN ME FOR LEAVING YOU FOR ANOTHER MAN, HAVE YOU?
YOU--!
MAYBE I'M NOT AS GOOD AT LOVING 'EM AND LEAVING 'EM AS SOME PEOPLE!

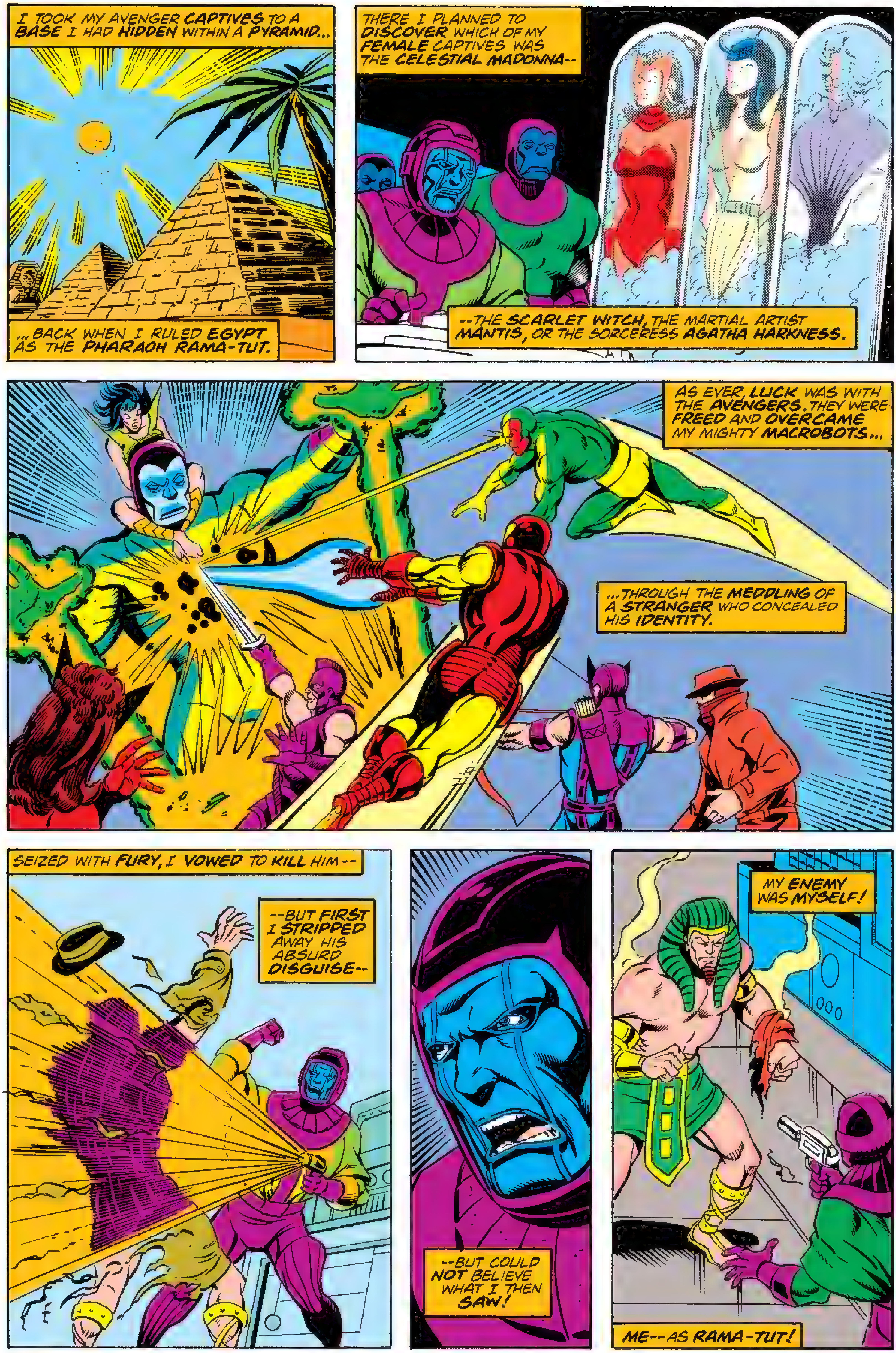

NEVER KNEW WHAT A *CAPABLE FIGHTER* RICHARDS WAS--
--HE'S EVADED *EVERY SINGLE THRUST* OF MY BLADE WITH THAT *SILLY-PUTTY SKIN* OF HIS!
BDOOM
FOR THE LAST TIME, DOCTOR-- MY TEAM AND I ARE HERE ON A MISSION TO *LOCATE KANG!* WE HAVE BEEN USING THE WOMAN AS OUR *GUIDE!* *SHE DOES NOT CONTROL US IN ANY WAY!*
SHE'S --*OUT.* I THINK, EH?
FANTASTIC FOUR-- *STOP!* THESE *ARE* THE REAL AVENGERS! THE TEMPTRESS WAS *LYING* TO CREATE A DIVERSION SO SHE COULD *SLIP AWAY!*
SHE'S *SUCCEEDED.* TRY AS I MIGHT, SHE HAS ELUDED MY *PURSUIT.* I BELIEVE SHE'S GONE THROUGH ANOTHER OF THOSE *TIME PORTALS* SHE WAS DIRECTING US THROUGH!
HMM! SO WE'RE ALL *STUCK HERE* WITHOUT THE *TIME SLED* OR A *QUINJET* OR--
I SAW WHERE THE *NEXT PORTAL* IS BUT I DID NOT WANT TO GO THROUGH IT WITHOUT THE *REST* OF YOU!

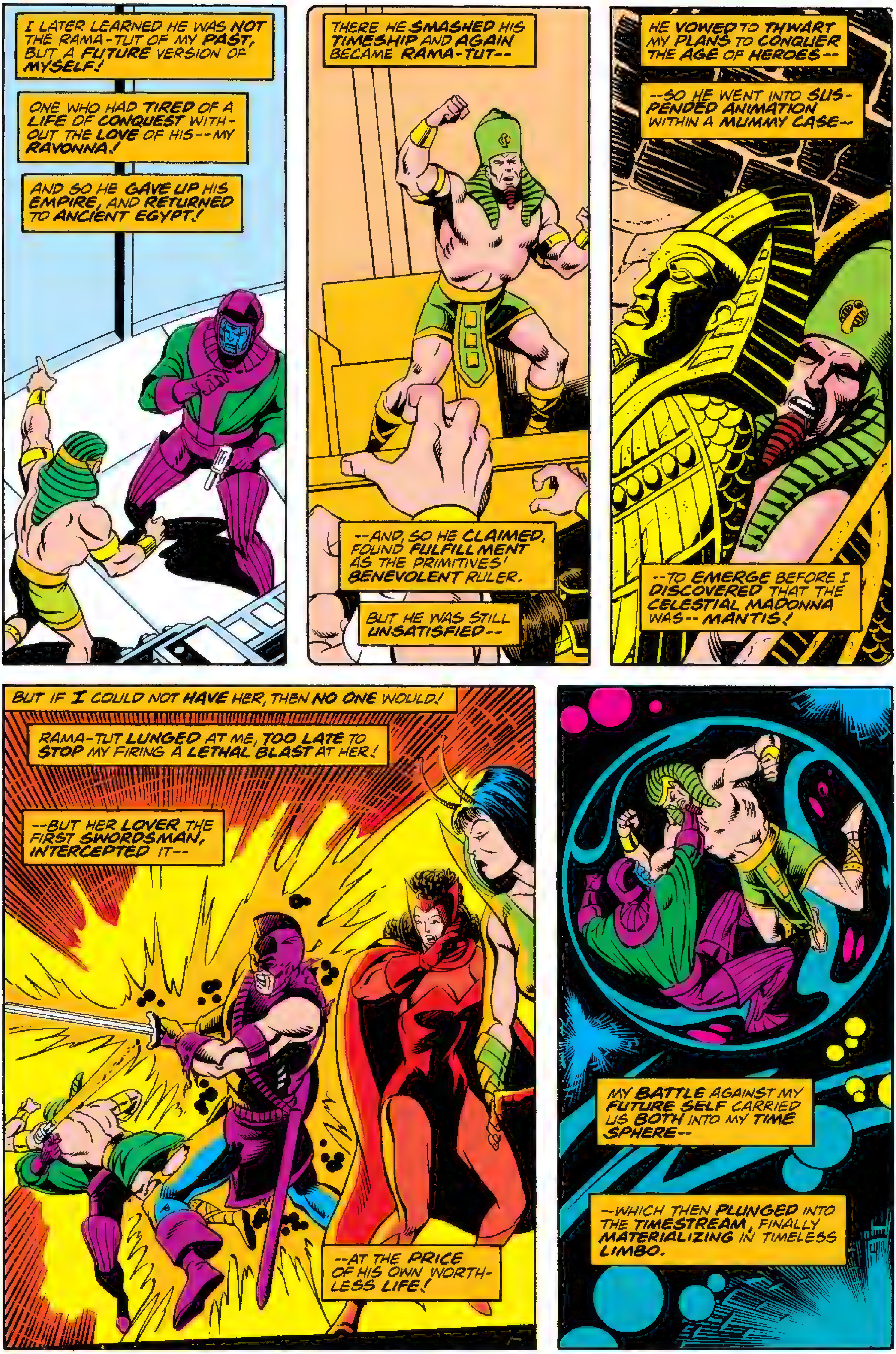

WAIT! SOMETHING'S *GLOWING* BEHIND US!
A *CIRCLE*--WITH *FIGURES*--COMING OUT OF IT!
WHOOPDEDOO! A LEGION O' *LOSERS* LININ' UP TO GET CLOBBERED.
WELCOME TO *CHRONOPOLIS*, MY LONG-TIME ENEMIES-- THE HOME BASE FOR MY LATEST CONQUEST, THE 20TH CENTURY!
ANACHRONAUTS-- SECURE THEM WITH *ALL DUE FORCE!*
YES, *LORD KANG!!!*
CONCLUDED IN AVENGERS ANNUAL #21, ON SALE NEXT WEEK!

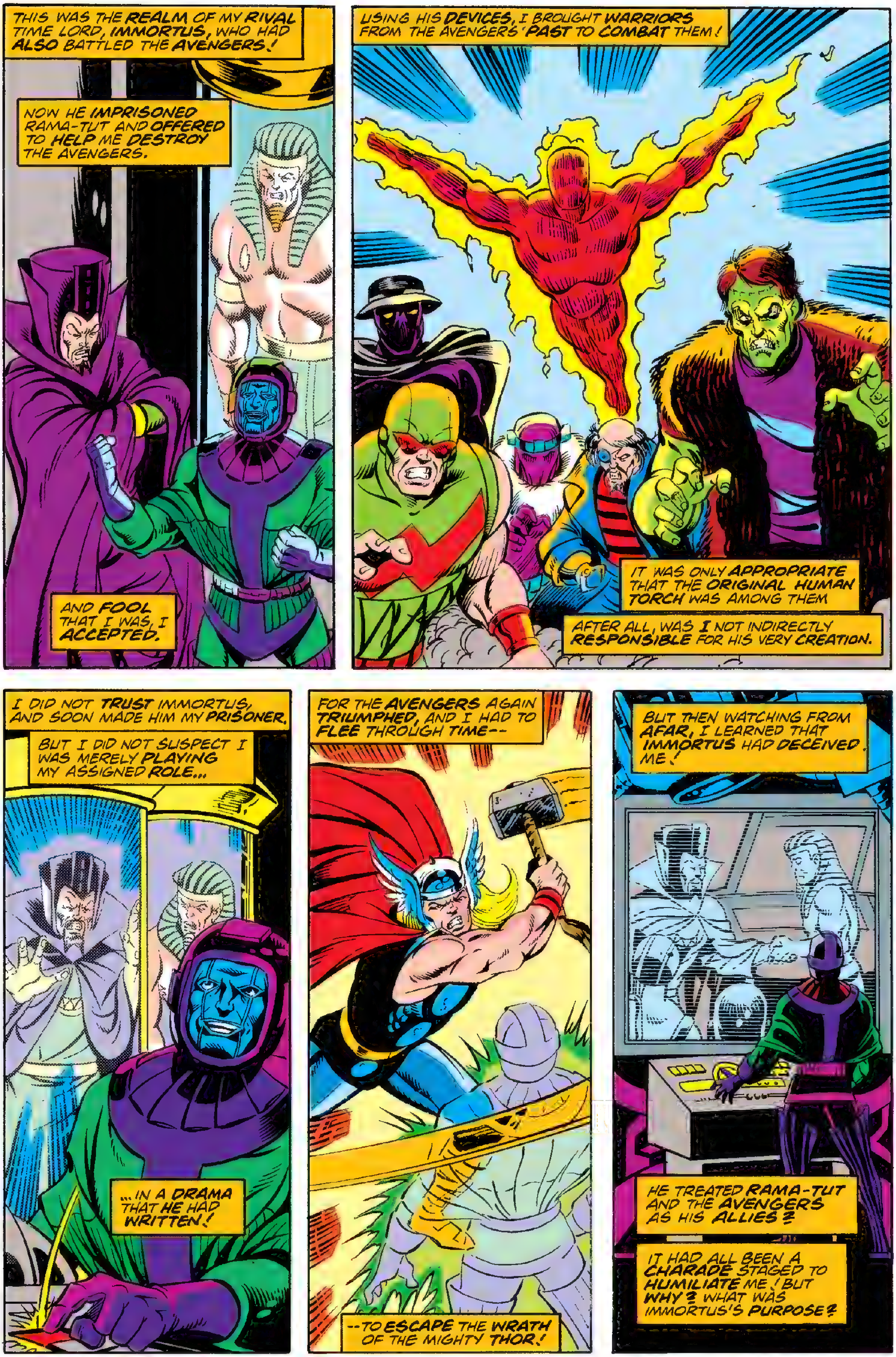

Stan Lee PRESENTS:
KANG
IN:
A HALL OF MIRRORS
LONG AGO, I, KANG, LEARNED THAT EACH OF MY TIME TRAVELS CREATED A DIVERGENCE IN REALITY.
EACH JOURNEY SPAWNED AN ALTERNATE REALITY WITH IT'S OWN KANG. SOME OF MY COUNTERPARTS WERE BLUNDERERS. OTHERS WERE USEFUL TO ME.
THEY WERE MY KEY TO IMMORTALITY, BUT I SHALL SPEAK OF THAT LATER.
FOR NOW, I CONTINUE MY CHRONICLE OF MY WAR AGAINST THE AGE OF THE SUPER HEROES.

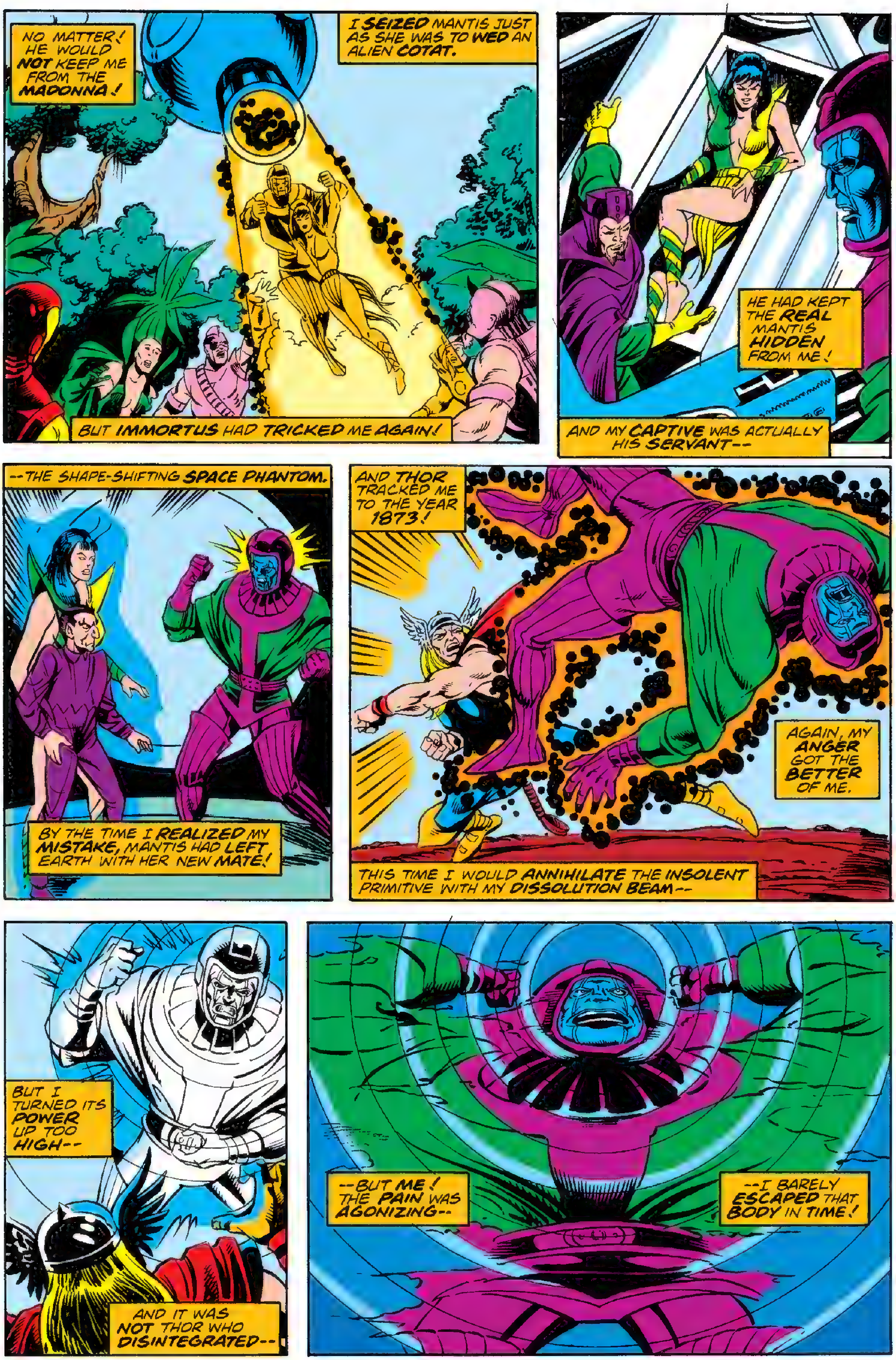

I MADE THE HULK MY PAWN IN A SCHEME TO ALTER THE COURSE OF A BATTLE IN WW II.
...THEREBY DIVERGING AN ALTERNATE REALITY IN WHICH HIS GRANDFATHER WAS KILLED. THERE WOULD NEVER BE A HULK...
...AND THE AVENGERS WOULD NEVER FORM TO COMBAT HIM!
BUT INSTEAD THE BRUTE DESTROYED THE GERMANS' LARGEST CANNON--
--ENSURING A VICTORY BY THE ALLIES!
WORSE, AS THE HULK RETURNED TO HIS OWN TIME--
--I BECAME ENTRAPPED WITHIN A TIME STORM!
AND THERE FLOATS THE MINDLESS BODY OF KANG FOR ETERNITY.
...KANG'S BODY, BUT NOT KANG HIMSELF.
SOON AFTERWARDS, I CAPTURED THE AVENGERS DURING MY WAR AGAINST MY SELF-STYLED RIVAL TIME LORD--
--ZARRKO THE TOMORROW MAN!

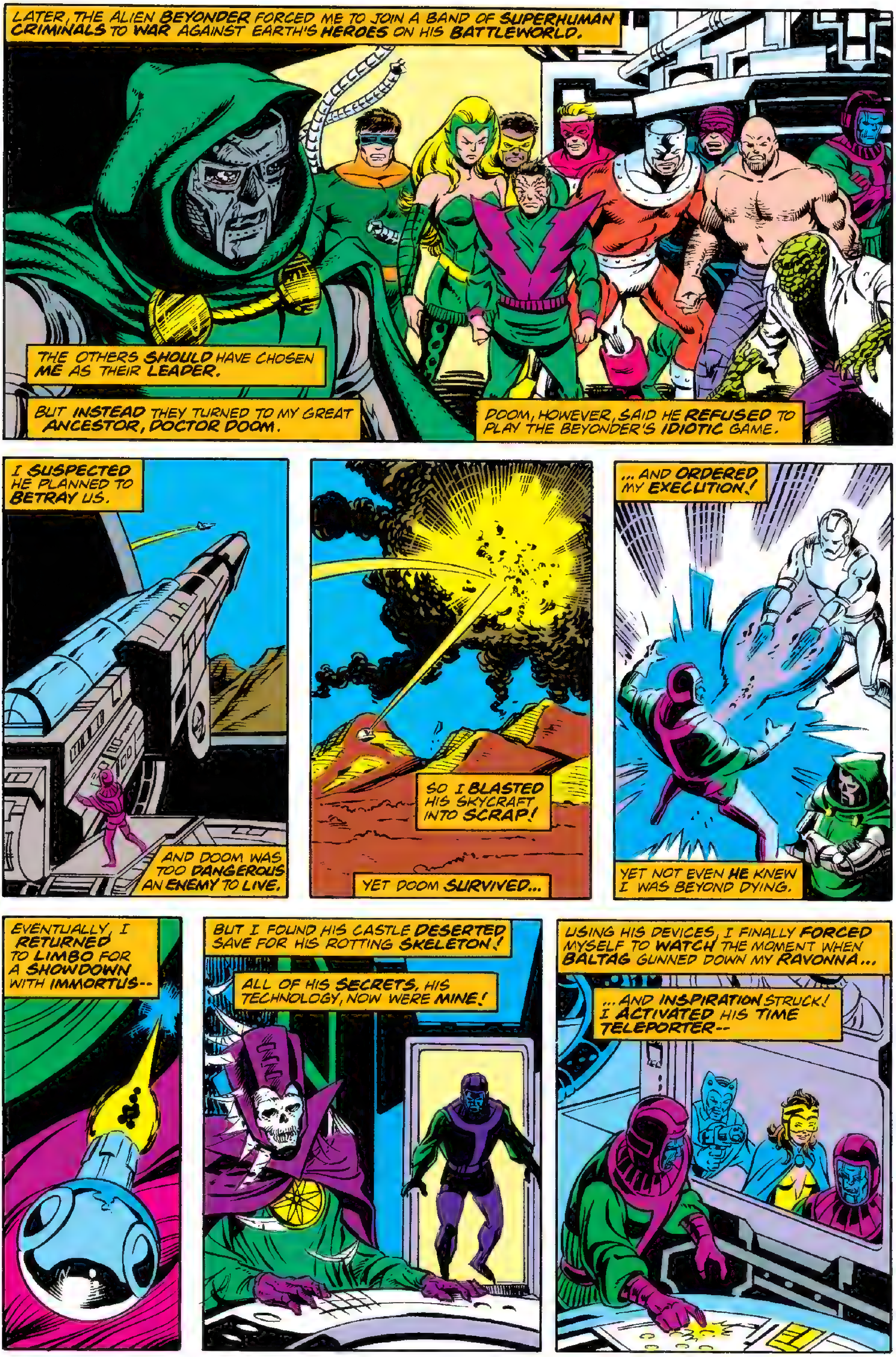

I EASILY OVERPOWERED THE FOOL, BUT THE AVENGERS' ALLY SPIDER-MAN FETCHED SOME INHUMANS AS REINFORCEMENTS.
THEIR KING, BLACK BOLT, HAD ONLY TO WHISPER ONE SHORT WORD--
--TO CREATE A SHOCK-WAVE THAT SHATTERED MY TRIUMPH--
--SO THEY THOUGHT.
BUT IT WAS ALL A GAME TO ME.
I WILL NEVER FORGET THE PRIMITIVES' SHOCK WHEN THEY LEARNED THIS "KANG" WAS MERELY AN EMPTY COSTUME--
--ANIMATED FROM AFAR BY ME!
HOW I LAUGHED AT THE IRONY! THEY MAY HAVE DEFEATED MY SPIDER-MAN ROBOT ONCE--
--BUT NOW I HAD HUMILIATED THEM WITH A PUPPET OF MYSELF!
I NEXT MET THE AVENGERS WHEN THEY UNKNOWINGLY SHELTERED THE CELESTIAL MADONNA...
...THE WOMAN DESTINED TO GIVE BIRTH TO THE MOST POWERFUL BEING ON EARTH!
AND I INTENDED TO FATHER THAT CHILD!

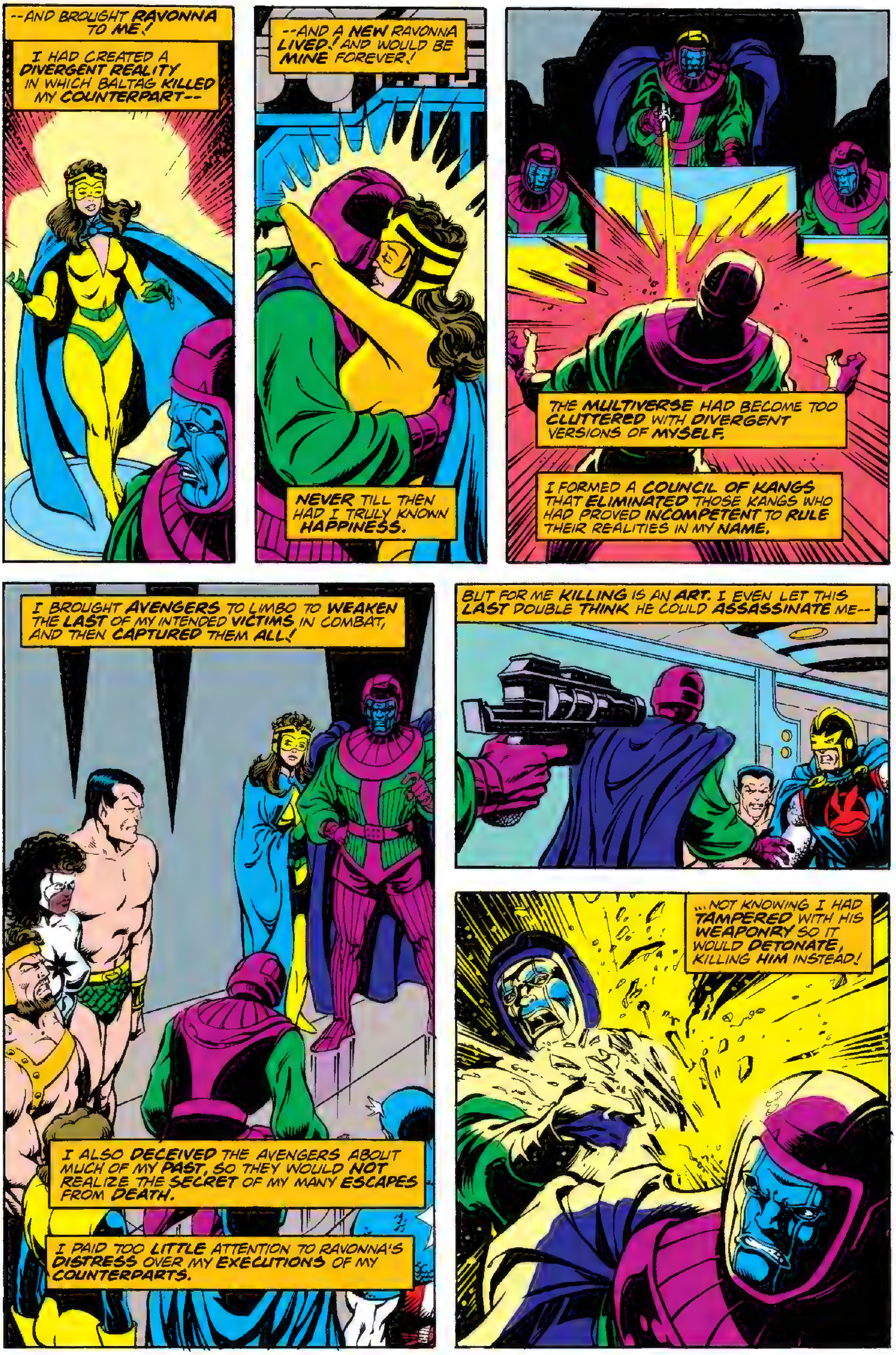

I TOOK MY AVENGER CAPTIVES TO A BASE I HAD HIDDEN WITHIN A PYRAMID...
...BACK WHEN I RULED EGYPT AS THE PHARAOH RAMA-TUT.
THERE I PLANNED TO DISCOVER WHICH OF MY FEMALE CAPTIVES WAS THE CELESTIAL MADONNA--
--THE SCARLET WITCH, THE MARTIAL ARTIST MANTIS, OR THE SORCERESS AGATHA HARKNESS.
AS EVER, LUCK WAS WITH THE AVENGERS. THEY WERE FREED AND OVERCAME MY MIGHTY MACROBOTS...
...THROUGH THE MEDDLING OF A STRANGER WHO CONCEALED HIS IDENTITY.
SEIZED WITH FURY, I VOWED TO KILL HIM--
--BUT FIRST I STRIPPED AWAY HIS ABSURD DISGUISE--
--BUT COULD NOT BELIEVE WHAT I THEN SAW!
MY ENEMY WAS MYSELF!
ME--AS RAMA-TUT!

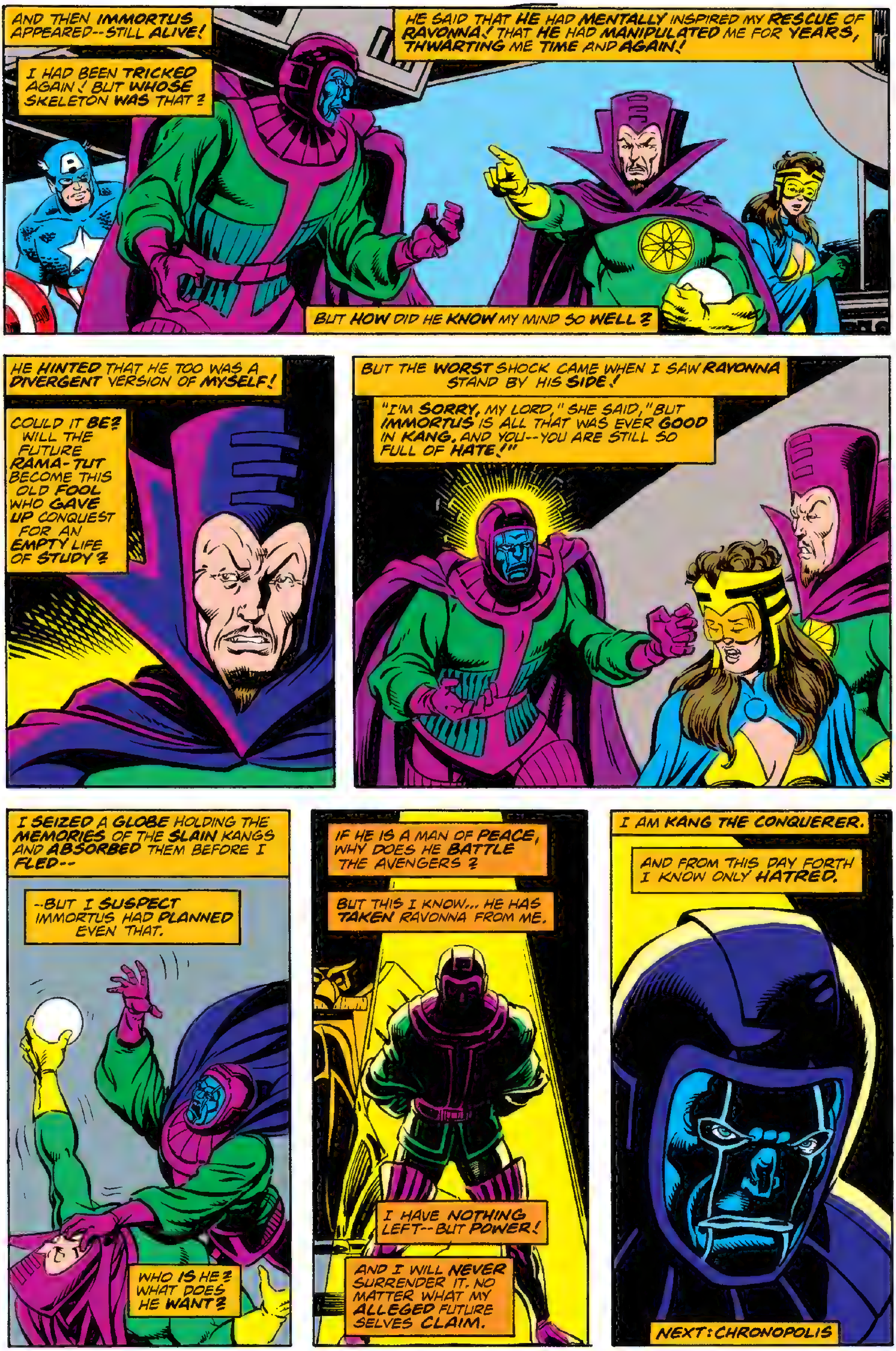

I LATER LEARNED HE WAS NOT THE RAMA-TUT OF MY PAST, BUT A FUTURE VERSION OF MYSELF!
ONE WHO HAD TIRED OF A LIFE OF CONQUEST WITHOUT THE LOVE OF HIS--MY RAVONNA!
AND SO HE GAVE UP HIS EMPIRE, AND RETURNED TO ANCIENT EGYPT!
THERE HE SMASHED HIS TIMESHIP AND AGAIN BECAME RAMA-TUT--
--AND, SO HE CLAIMED, FOUND FULFILLMENT AS THE PRIMITIVES' BENEVOLENT RULER.
BUT HE WAS STILL UNSATISFIED--
HE VOWED TO THWART MY PLANS TO CONQUER THE AGE OF HEROES--
--SO HE WENT INTO SUSPENDED ANIMATION WITHIN A MUMMY CASE--
--TO EMERGE BEFORE I DISCOVERED THAT THE CELESTIAL MADONNA WAS--MANTIS!
BUT IF I COULD NOT HAVE HER, THEN NO ONE WOULD!
RAMA-TUT LUNGED AT ME, TOO LATE TO STOP MY FIRING A LETHAL BLAST AT HER!
--BUT HER LOVER THE FIRST SWORDSMAN, INTERCEPTED IT--
--AT THE PRICE OF HIS OWN WORTHLESS LIFE!
MY BATTLE AGAINST MY FUTURE SELF CARRIED US BOTH INTO MY TIME SPHERE--
--WHICH THEN PLUNGED INTO THE TIMESTREAM, FINALLY MATERIALIZING IN TIMELESS LIMBO.


THIS WAS THE REALM OF MY RIVAL TIME LORD, IMMORTUS, WHO HAD ALSO BATTLED THE AVENGERS!
NOW HE IMPRISONED RAMA-TUT AND OFFERED TO HELP ME DESTROY THE AVENGERS.
AND FOOL THAT I WAS, I ACCEPTED.
USING HIS DEVICES, I BROUGHT WARRIORS FROM THE AVENGERS' PAST TO COMBAT THEM!
IT WAS ONLY APPROPRIATE THAT THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH WAS AMONG THEM
AFTER ALL, WAS I NOT INDIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS VERY CREATION.
I DID NOT TRUST IMMORTUS, AND SOON MADE HIM MY PRISONER.
BUT I DID NOT SUSPECT I WAS MERELY PLAYING MY ASSIGNED ROLE...
...IN A DRAMA THAT HE HAD WRITTEN!
FOR THE AVENGERS AGAIN TRIUMPHED, AND I HAD TO FLEE THROUGH TIME--
--TO ESCAPE THE WRATH OF THE MIGHTY THOR!
BUT THEN WATCHING FROM AFAR, I LEARNED THAT IMMORTUS HAD DECEIVED ME!
HE TREATED RAMA-TUT AND THE AVENGERS AS HIS ALLIES?
IT HAD ALL BEEN A CHARADE STAGED TO HUMILIATE ME! BUT WHY? WHAT WAS IMMORTUS'S PURPOSE?


NO MATTER! HE WOULD NOT KEEP ME FROM THE MADONNA!
I SEIZED MANTIS JUST AS SHE WAS TO WED AN ALIEN COTAT.
BUT IMMORTUS HAD TRICKED ME AGAIN!
HE HAD KEPT THE REAL MANTIS HIDDEN FROM ME!
AND MY CAPTIVE WAS ACTUALLY HIS SERVANT--
--THE SHAPE-SHIFTING SPACE PHANTOM.
BY THE TIME I REALIZED MY MISTAKE, MANTIS HAD LEFT EARTH WITH HER NEW MATE!
AND THOR TRACKED ME TO THE YEAR 1873!
AGAIN, MY ANGER GOT THE BETTER OF ME.
THIS TIME I WOULD ANNIHILATE THE INSOLENT PRIMITIVE WITH MY DISSOLUTION BEAM--
BUT I TURNED ITS POWER UP TOO HIGH--
AND IT WAS NOT THOR WHO DISINTEGRATED--
--BUT ME! THE PAIN WAS AGONIZING--
--I BARELY ESCAPED THAT BODY IN TIME!


LATER, THE ALIEN BEYONDER FORCED ME TO JOIN A BAND OF SUPERHUMAN CRIMINALS TO WAR AGAINST EARTH'S HEROES ON HIS BATTLEWORLD.
THE OTHERS SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN ME AS THEIR LEADER.
BUT INSTEAD THEY TURNED TO MY GREAT ANCESTOR, DOCTOR DOOM.
DOOM, HOWEVER, SAID HE REFUSED TO PLAY THE BEYONDER'S IDIOTIC GAME.
I SUSPECTED HE PLANNED TO BETRAY US.
AND DOOM WAS TOO DANGEROUS AN ENEMY TO LIVE.
SO I BLASTED HIS SKYCRAFT INTO SCRAP!
YET DOOM SURVIVED...
...AND ORDERED MY EXECUTION!
YET NOT EVEN HE KNEW I WAS BEYOND DYING.
EVENTUALLY, I RETURNED TO LIMBO FOR A SHOWDOWN WITH IMMORTUS--
BUT I FOUND HIS CASTLE DESERTED SAVE FOR HIS ROTTING SKELETON!
ALL OF HIS SECRETS, HIS TECHNOLOGY, NOW WERE MINE!
USING HIS DEVICES, I FINALLY FORCED MYSELF TO WATCH THE MOMENT WHEN BALTAG GUNNED DOWN MY RAVONNA...
...AND INSPIRATION STRUCK! I ACTIVATED HIS TIME TELEPORTER--


--AND BROUGHT **RAVONNA** TO **ME!**
I HAD CREATED A **DIVERGENT REALITY** IN WHICH BALTAG **KILLED** MY **COUNTERPART--**
--AND A **NEW** RAVONNA **LIVED!** AND WOULD BE **MINE** FOREVER!
NEVER TILL THEN HAD I TRULY KNOWN **HAPPINESS.**
THE **MULTIVERSE** HAD BECOME TOO **CLUTTERED** WITH **DIVERGENT** VERSIONS OF **MYSELF.**
I FORMED A **COUNCIL OF KANGS** THAT **ELIMINATED** THOSE KANGS WHO HAD PROVED **INCOMPETENT** TO **RULE** THEIR REALITIES IN MY **NAME.**
I BROUGHT **AVENGERS** TO LIMBO TO **WEAKEN** THE **LAST** OF MY INTENDED **VICTIMS** IN COMBAT, AND THEN **CAPTURED** THEM **ALL!**
I ALSO **DECEIVED** THE AVENGERS ABOUT MUCH OF MY **PAST**, SO THEY WOULD **NOT** REALIZE THE **SECRET** OF MY MANY **ESCAPES** FROM **DEATH.**
I PAID TOO **LITTLE** ATTENTION TO RAVONNA'S **DISTRESS** OVER MY **EXECUTIONS** OF MY **COUNTERPARTS.**
BUT FOR ME **KILLING** IS AN **ART.** I EVEN LET THIS **LAST** DOUBLE **THINK** HE COULD **ASSASSINATE** ME--
...NOT KNOWING I HAD **TAMPERED** WITH HIS **WEAPONRY** SO IT WOULD **DETONATE, KILLING HIM** INSTEAD!


AND THEN IMMORTUS APPEARED--STILL ALIVE!
I HAD BEEN TRICKED AGAIN! BUT WHOSE SKELETON WAS THAT?
HE SAID THAT HE HAD MENTALLY INSPIRED MY RESCUE OF RAVONNA! THAT HE HAD MANIPULATED ME FOR YEARS, THWARTING ME TIME AND AGAIN!
BUT HOW DID HE KNOW MY MIND SO WELL?
HE HINTED THAT HE TOO WAS A DIVERGENT VERSION OF MYSELF!
COULD IT BE? WILL THE FUTURE RAMA-TUT BECOME THIS OLD FOOL WHO GAVE UP CONQUEST FOR AN EMPTY LIFE OF STUDY?
BUT THE WORST SHOCK CAME WHEN I SAW RAVONNA STAND BY HIS SIDE!
"I'M SORRY, MY LORD," SHE SAID, "BUT IMMORTUS IS ALL THAT WAS EVER GOOD IN KANG. AND YOU--YOU ARE STILL SO FULL OF HATE!"
I SEIZED A GLOBE HOLDING THE MEMORIES OF THE SLAIN KANGS AND ABSORBED THEM BEFORE I FLED--
--BUT I SUSPECT IMMORTUS HAD PLANNED EVEN THAT.
WHO IS HE? WHAT DOES HE WANT?
IF HE IS A MAN OF PEACE, WHY DOES HE BATTLE THE AVENGERS?
BUT THIS I KNOW... HE HAS TAKEN RAVONNA FROM ME.
I HAVE NOTHING LEFT--BUT POWER!
AND I WILL NEVER SURRENDER IT, NO MATTER WHAT MY ALLEGED FUTURE SELVES CLAIM.
I AM KANG THE CONQUERER.
AND FROM THIS DAY FORTH I KNOW ONLY HATRED.
NEXT: CHRONOPOLIS

MARVEL COMICS
ANNUAL
CITIZEN KANG™
64 PAGES
$2.25 U.S.
$2.70 Can.
AVENGERS
21 • 1992
02922
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Part 4
AVENGERS
ENTER THE ANACHRO-NAUTS!
RAA
SSITH
PANOSIAN 92
TYNDAR
REDWOLF
APOCRYPHUS
SIR RASTON
DEATHUNT 9000

CITIZEN KANG™

Part 4

FEATURING:

THE AVENGERS®

◆ ◆ ◆

"KANG'S WORLD" (CITIZEN KANG, PART 4)

WRITER - MARK GRUENWALD
BREAKDOWNS - HERB TRIMPE
FINISHES - CHARLES BARNETT & BRAD VANCATA
LETTERS - STEVE DUTRO
COLORS - GINA GOING

◆ ◆ ◆

"THE ANACHRONAUTS" PIN-UP

ART - DAN PANOSIAN
COLORS - GINA GOING

◆ ◆ ◆

"CHRONOPOLIS"

CONCEPT - MARK GRUENWALD
PENCILS - HERB TRIMPE
INKS - CHARLES BARNETT
COLORS - GINA GOING

◆ ◆ ◆

"THE AVENGERS' TOP TEN VILLAINS"

WRITER - GEORGE CARAGONNE
ART - KARL ALTSTAETTER
LETTERS - DAVE SHARPE
COLORS - NEL YOMTOV

◆ ◆ ◆

"SECRETS OF THE AVENGERS' COMMUNICARD"

WORDS - MARK GRUENWALD
PICTURES - ELIOT BROWN
COLORS - GINA GOING

◆ ◆ ◆

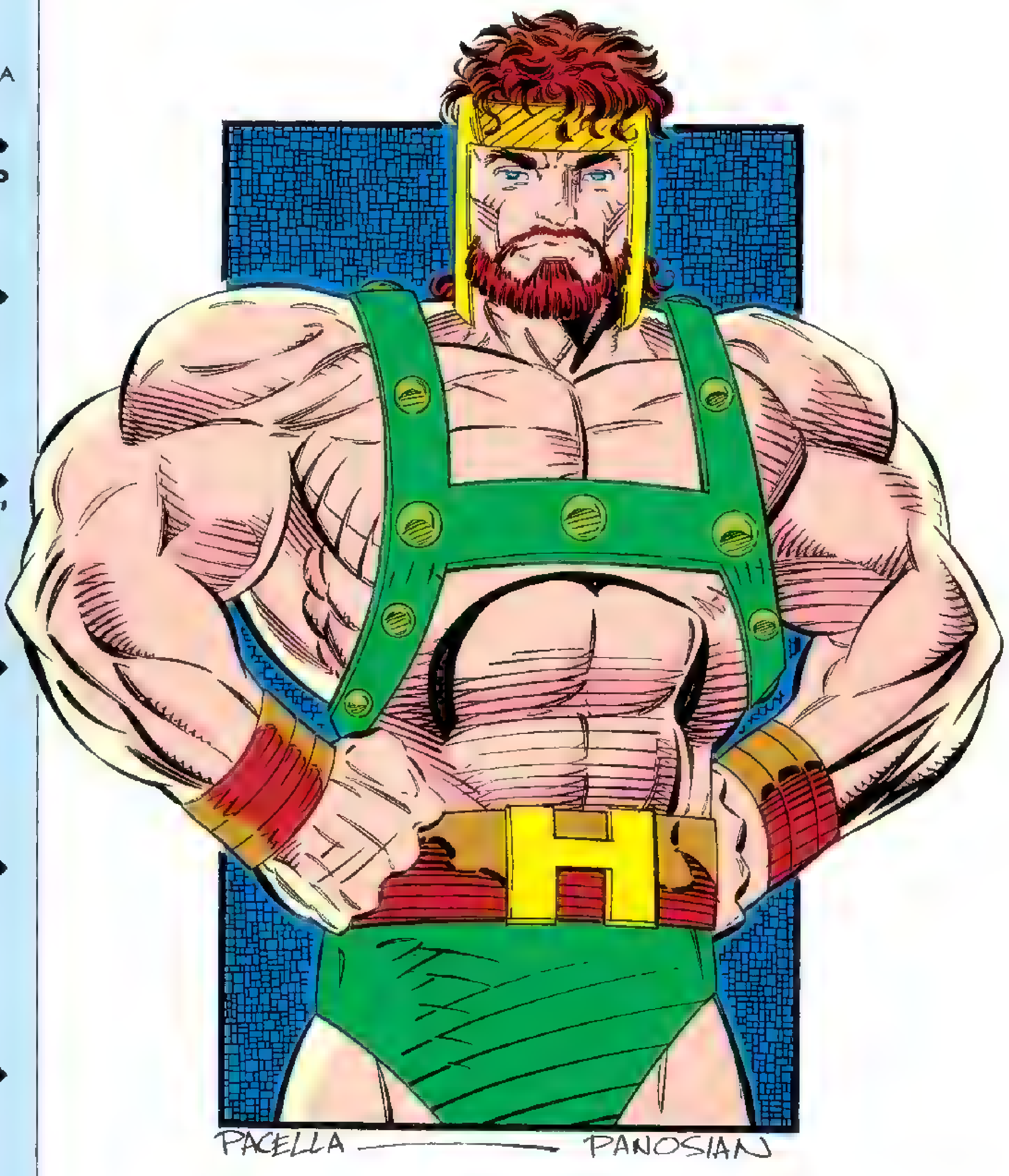
"BOYS' NIGHT OUT"

WRITER - SCOTT BENSON
BREAKDOWNS - RON LIM
FINISHES - DAN PANOSIAN
LETTERS - STEVE DUTRO
COLORS - SCOTT MARSHALL

◆ ◆ ◆

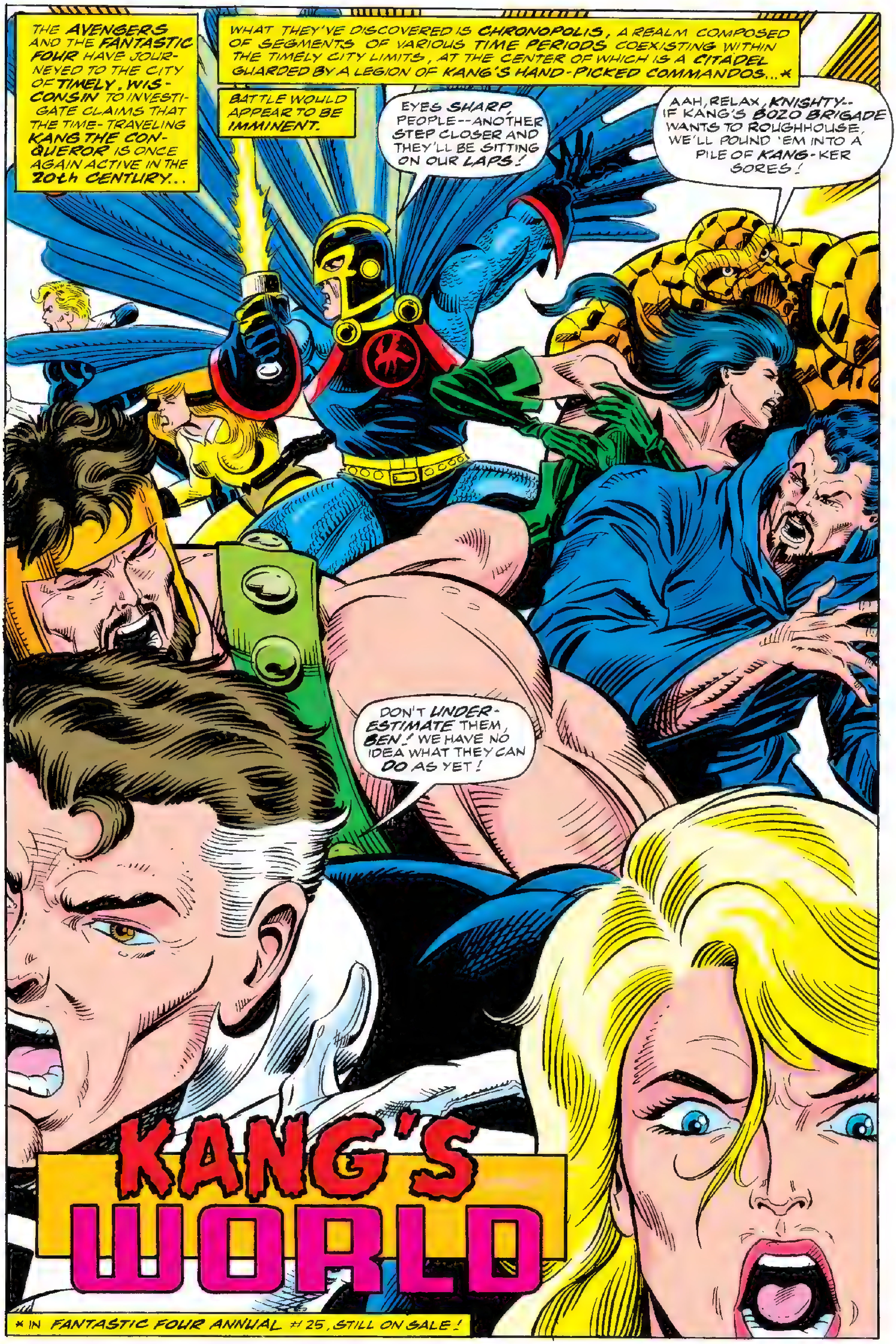
"THE PUZZLE"

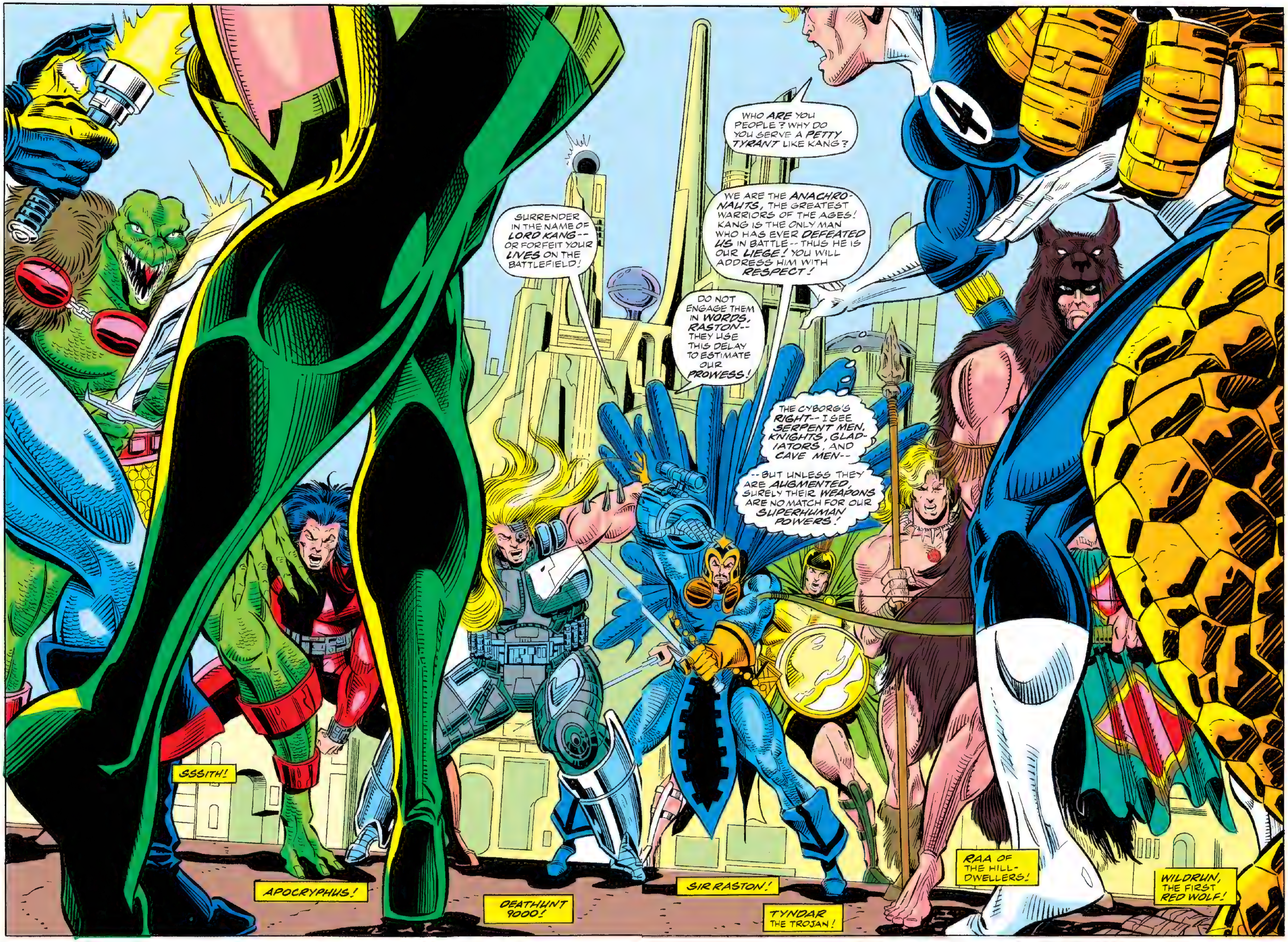
WRITER - PETER SANDERSON
PENCILS - RICH YANIZESKI
INKS - FRED FREDERICKS
LETTERS - DAVE SHARPE
COLORS - SCOTT MARSHALL

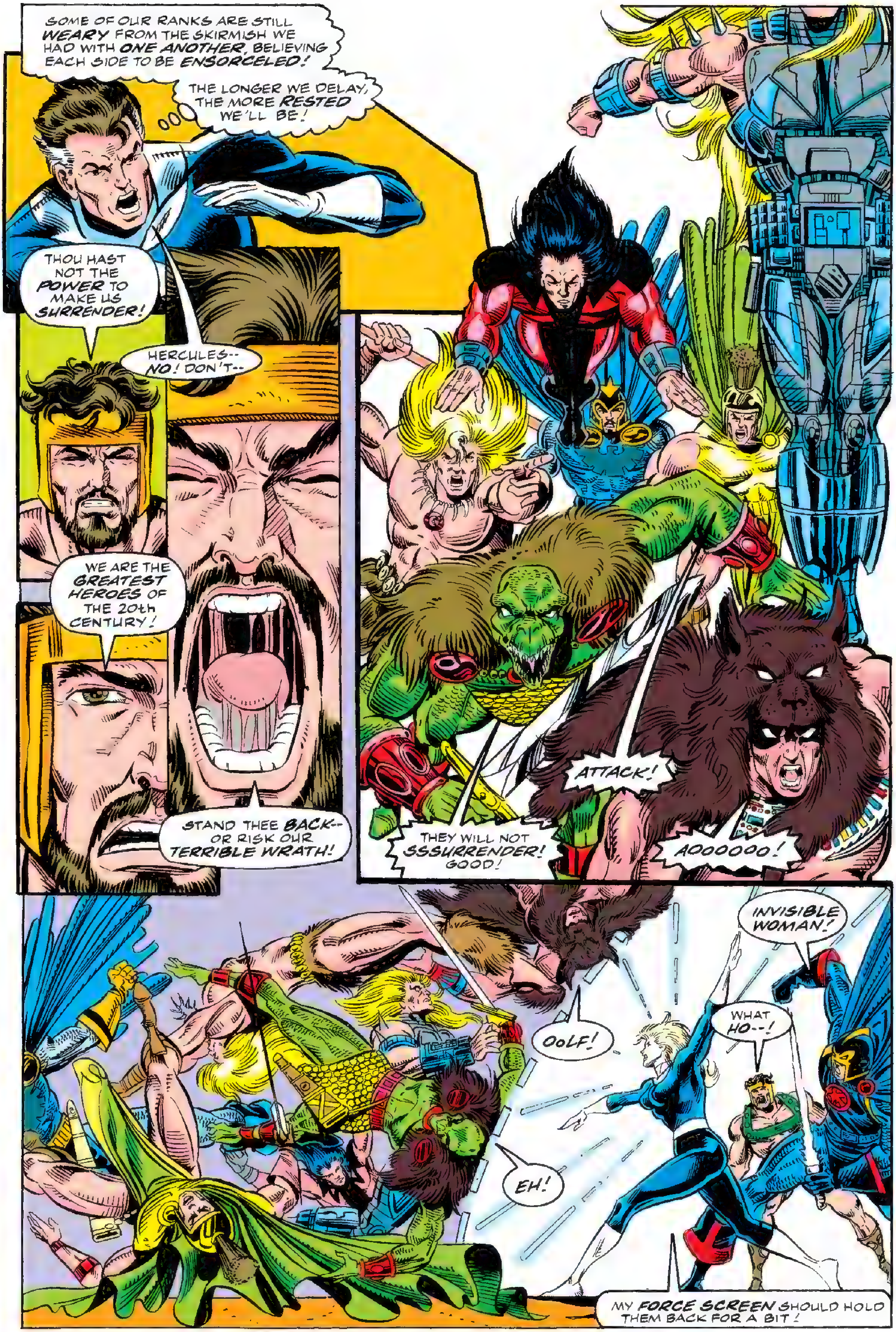


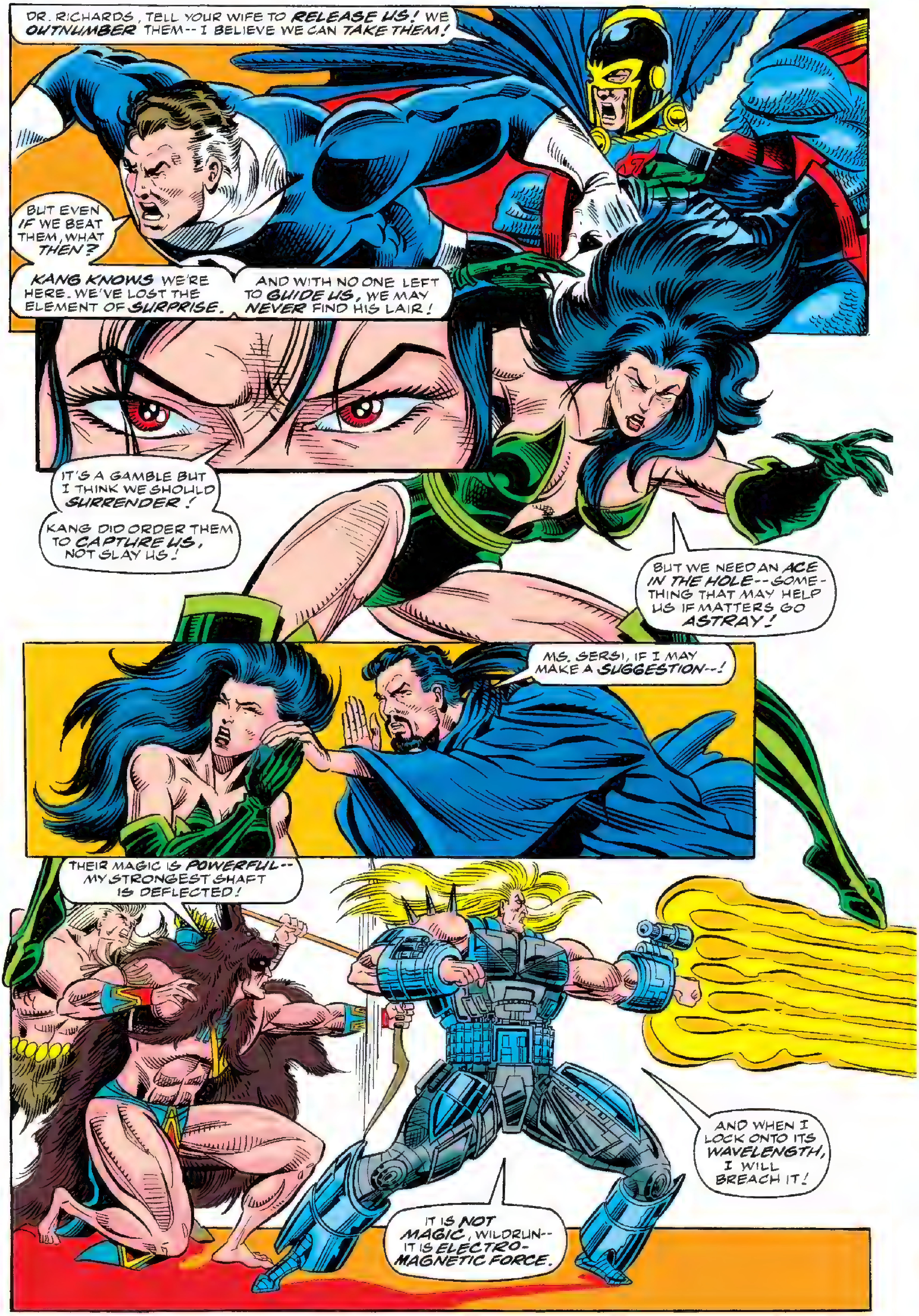
ASSISTANT EDITOR - PAT GARRAHY **EDITOR** - RALPH MACCHIO **EDITOR IN CHIEF** - TOM DEFALCO

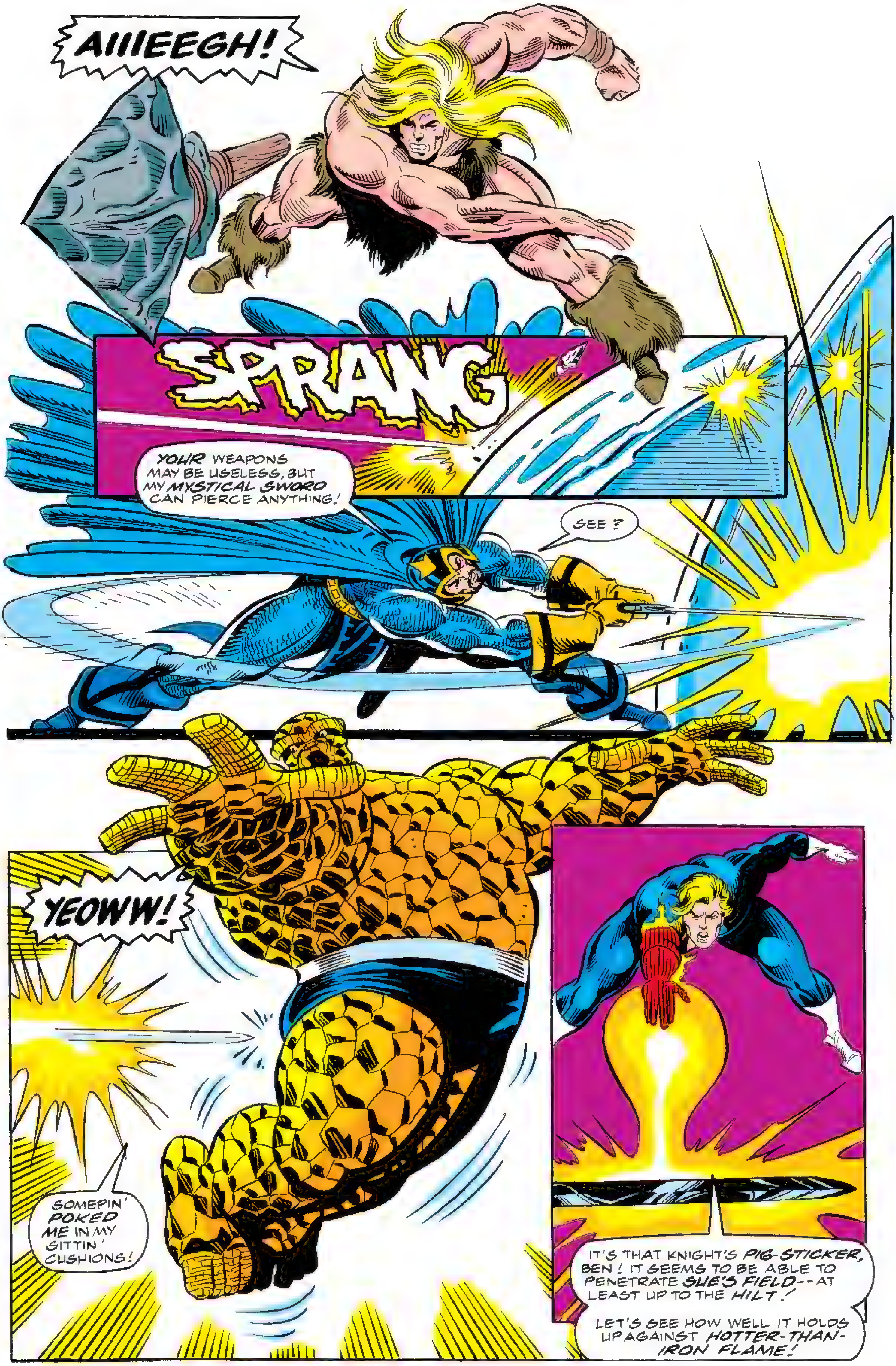
◆ ◆ ◆

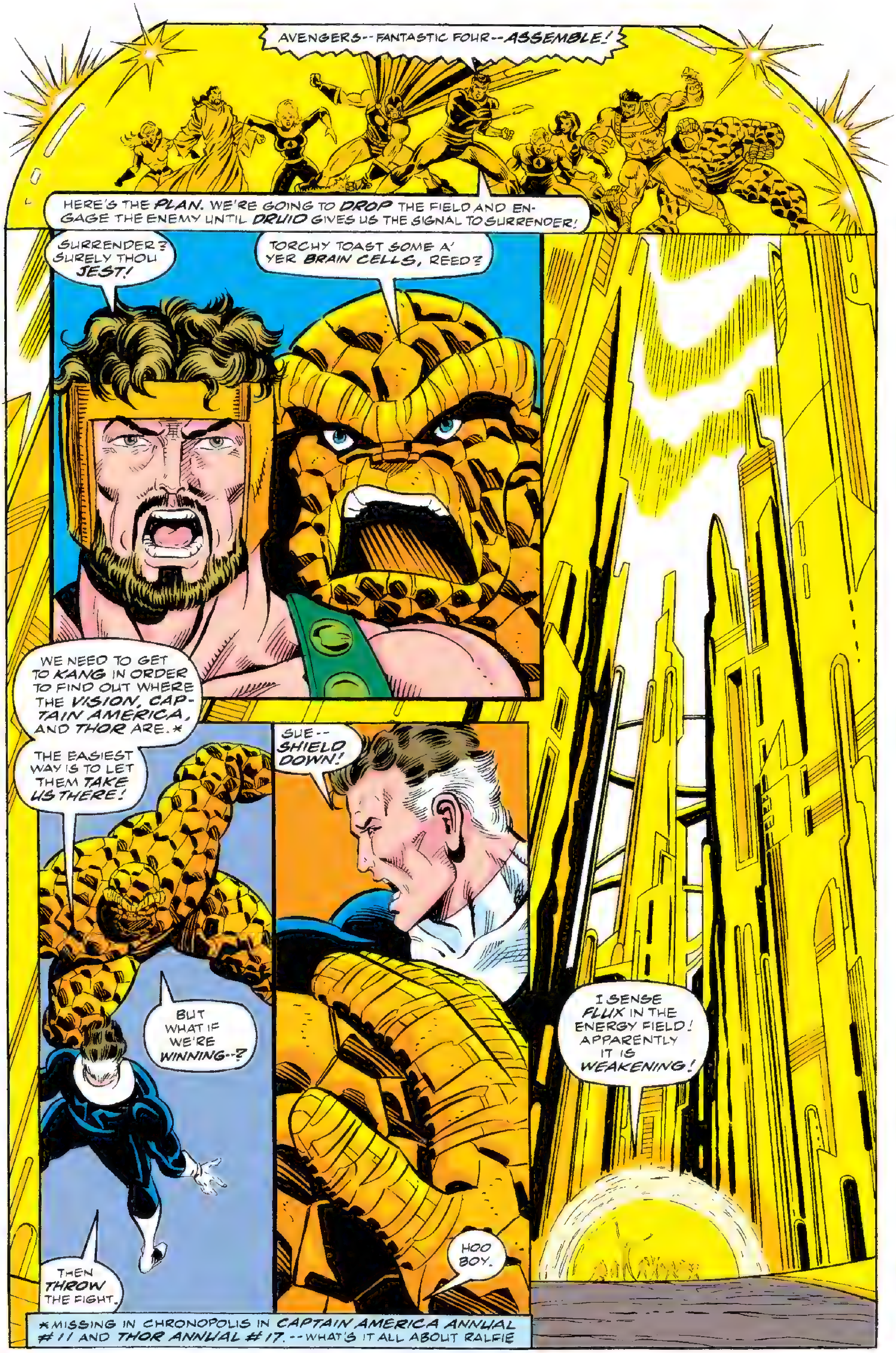

THE AVENGERS AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE JOURNEYED TO THE CITY OF TIMELY, WISCONSIN TO INVESTIGATE CLAIMS THAT THE TIME-TRAVELING KANG THE CONQUEROR IS ONCE AGAIN ACTIVE IN THE 20th CENTURY...
WHAT THEY'VE DISCOVERED IS CHRONOPOLIS, A REALM COMPOSED OF SEGMENTS OF VARIOUS TIME PERIODS COEXISTING WITHIN THE TIMELY CITY LIMITS, AT THE CENTER OF WHICH IS A CITADEL GUARDED BY A LEGION OF KANG'S HAND-PICKED COMMANDOS...*
BATTLE WOULD APPEAR TO BE IMMINENT.
EYES SHARP, PEOPLE--ANOTHER STEP CLOSER AND THEY'LL BE SITTING ON OUR LAPS!
AAH, RELAX, KNIGHTY-- IF KANG'S BOZO BRIGADE WANTS TO ROUGHHOUSE, WE'LL POUND 'EM INTO A PILE OF KANG-KER SORES!
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THEM, BEN! WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY CAN DO AS YET!
KANG'S WORLD
* IN FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #25, STILL ON SALE!

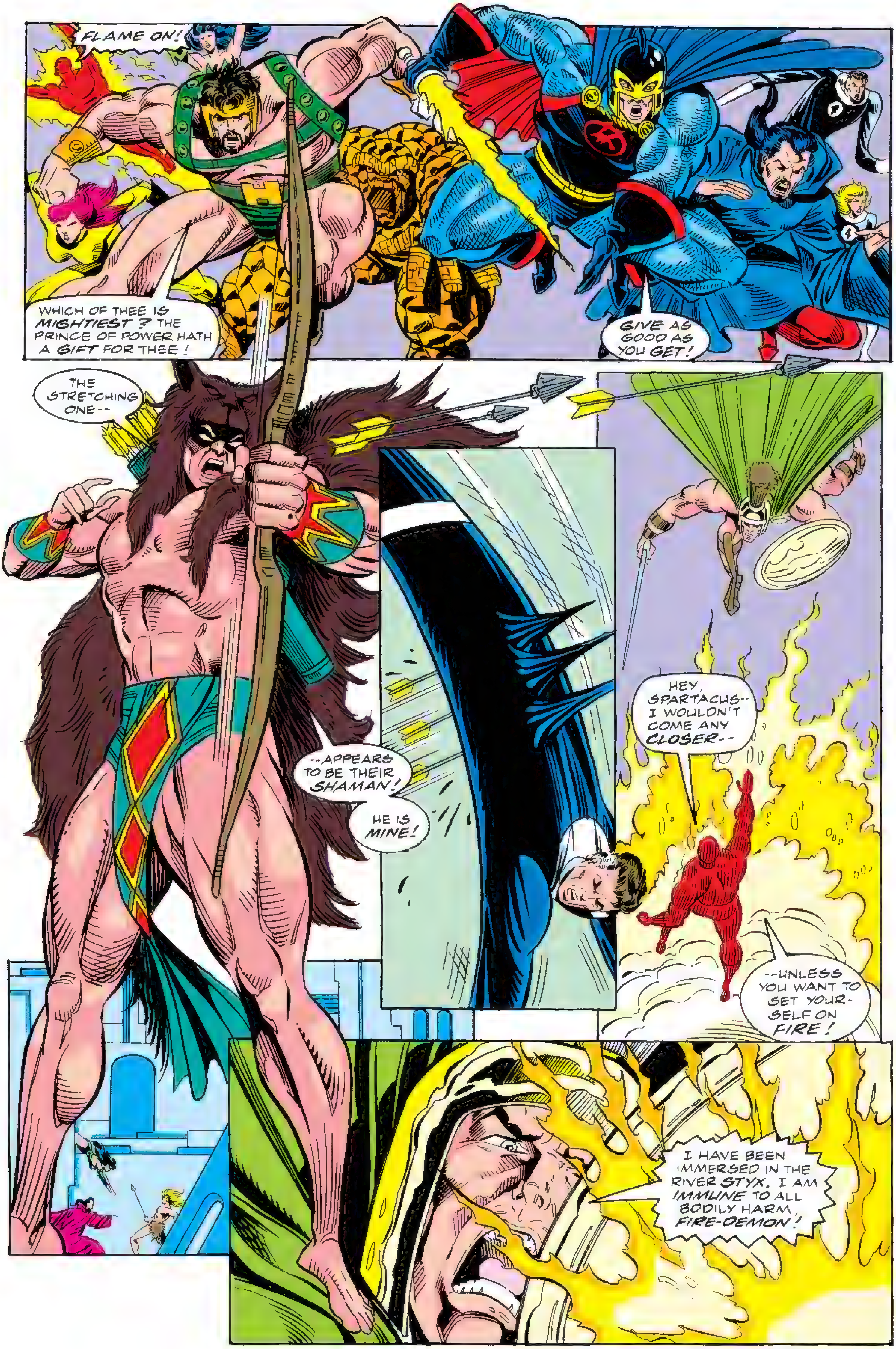

SURRENDER IN THE NAME OF LORD KANG -- OR FORFEIT YOUR LIVES ON THE BATTLEFIELD!
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE? WHY DO YOU SERVE A PETTY TYRANT LIKE KANG?
WE ARE THE ANACHRONAUTS, THE GREATEST WARRIORS OF THE AGES! KANG IS THE ONLY MAN WHO HAS EVER DEFEATED US IN BATTLE -- THUS HE IS OUR LIEGE! YOU WILL ADDRESS HIM WITH RESPECT!
DO NOT ENGAGE THEM IN WORDS, RASTON -- THEY USE THIS DELAY TO ESTIMATE OUR PROWESS!
THE CYBORG'S RIGHT -- I SEE SERPENT MEN, KNIGHTS, GLADIATORS, AND CAVE MEN --
-- BUT UNLESS THEY ARE AUGMENTED, SURELY THEIR WEAPONS ARE NO MATCH FOR OUR SUPERHUMAN POWERS!
SSSITH!
APOCRYPHUS!
DEATHUNT 9000!
SIR RASTON!
TYNDAR THE TROJAN!
RAA OF THE HILL-DWELLERS!
WILDRUN, THE FIRST RED WOLF!


SOME OF OUR RANKS ARE STILL WEARY FROM THE SKIRMISH WE HAD WITH ONE ANOTHER, BELIEVING EACH SIDE TO BE ENSORCELED!
THE LONGER WE DELAY, THE MORE RESTED WE'LL BE!
THOU HAST NOT THE POWER TO MAKE US SURRENDER!
HERCULES-- NO! DON'T--
WE ARE THE GREATEST HEROES OF THE 20th CENTURY!
STAND THEE BACK-- OR RISK OUR TERRIBLE WRATH!
ATTACK!
THEY WILL NOT SSSURRENDER! GOOD!
AOOOOOO!
OOLF!
EH!
INVISIBLE WOMAN!
WHAT HO--!
MY FORCE SCREEN SHOULD HOLD THEM BACK FOR A BIT!


DR. RICHARDS, TELL YOUR WIFE TO RELEASE US! WE OUTNUMBER THEM-- I BELIEVE WE CAN TAKE THEM!
BUT EVEN IF WE BEAT THEM, WHAT THEN?
KANG KNOWS WE'RE HERE. WE'VE LOST THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.
AND WITH NO ONE LEFT TO GUIDE US, WE MAY NEVER FIND HIS LAIR!
IT'S A GAMBLE BUT I THINK WE SHOULD SURRENDER!
KANG DID ORDER THEM TO CAPTURE US, NOT SLAY US!
BUT WE NEED AN ACE IN THE HOLE--SOMETHING THAT MAY HELP US IF MATTERS GO ASTRAY!
MS. SERSI, IF I MAY MAKE A SUGGESTION--!
THEIR MAGIC IS POWERFUL-- MY STRONGEST SHAFT IS DEFLECTED!
IT IS NOT MAGIC, WILDRUN-- IT IS ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FORCE.
AND WHEN I LOCK ONTO ITS WAVELENGTH, I WILL BREACH IT!

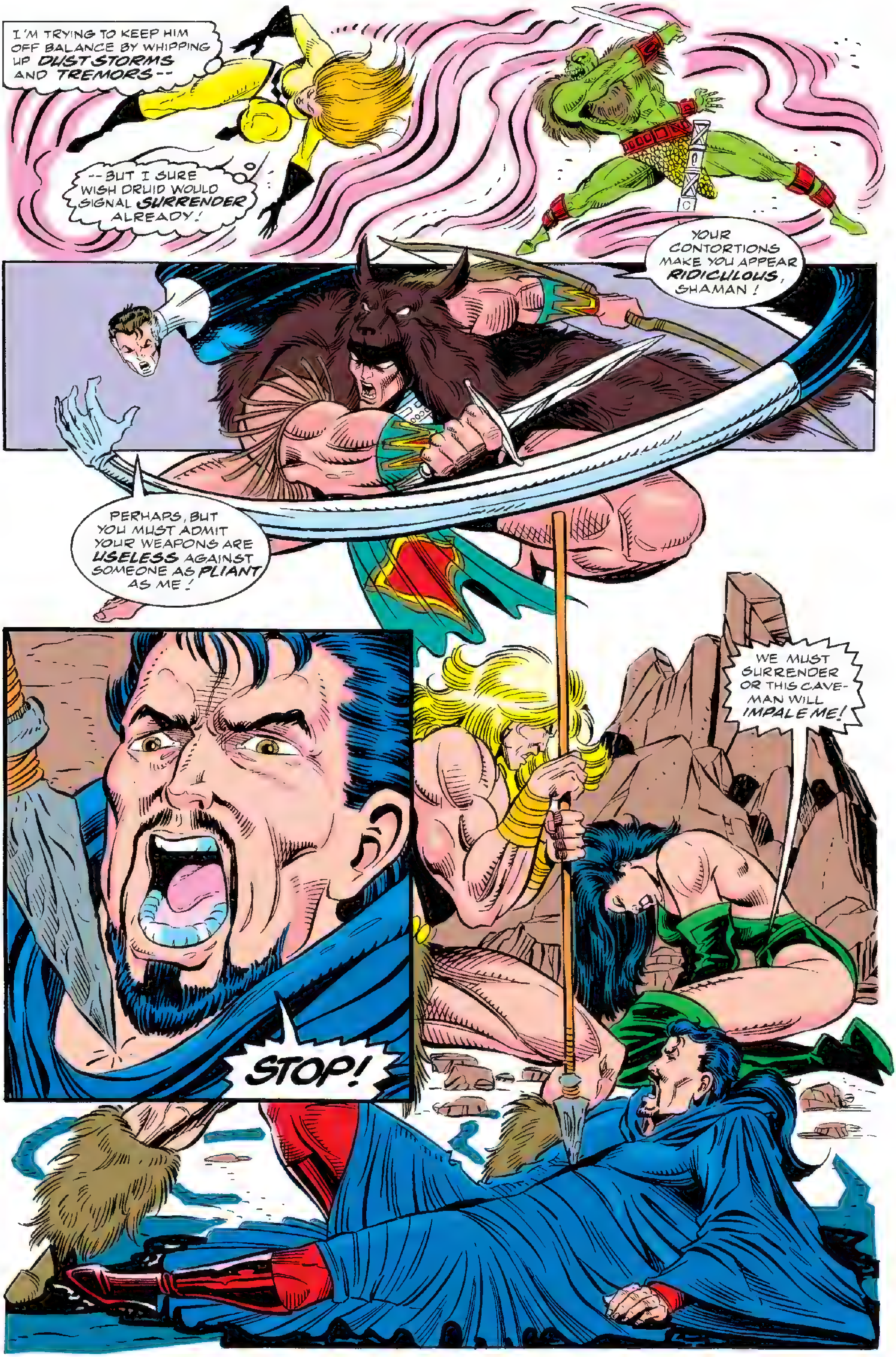

AIIIEEGH!
SPRANG
YOUR WEAPONS MAY BE USELESS, BUT MY MYSTICAL SWORD CAN PIERCE ANYTHING!
SEE?
YEOWW!
SOMEPIN' POKED ME IN MY SITTIN' CUSHIONS!
IT'S THAT KNIGHT'S PIG-STICKER, BEN! IT SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO PENETRATE SUE'S FIELD-- AT LEAST UP TO THE HILT!
LET'S SEE HOW WELL IT HOLDS UP AGAINST HOTTER-THAN-IRON FLAME!

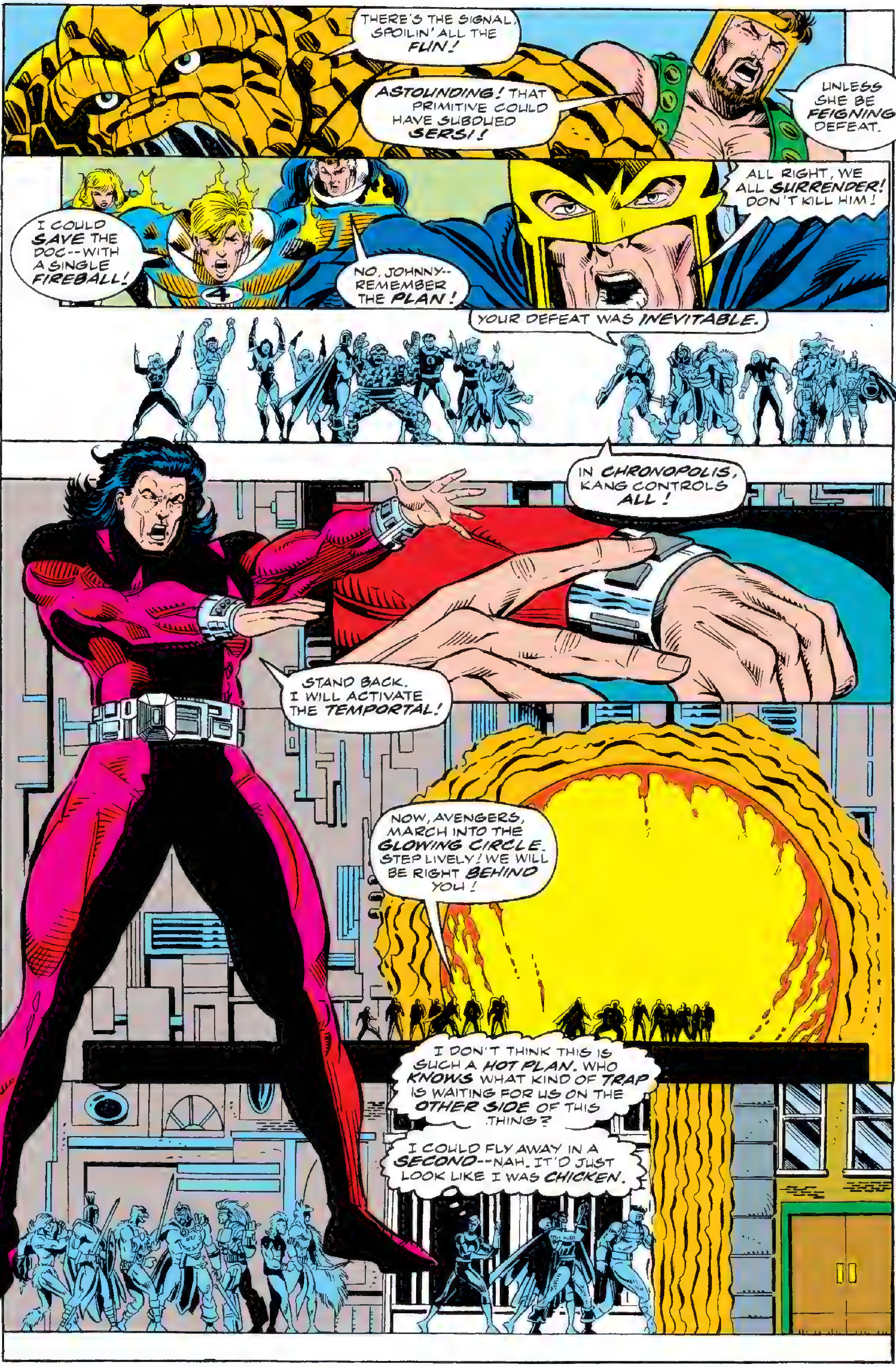

AVENGERS--FANTASTIC FOUR--ASSEMBLE!
HERE'S THE PLAN. WE'RE GOING TO DROP THE FIELD AND ENGAGE THE ENEMY UNTIL DRUID GIVES US THE SIGNAL TO SURRENDER!
SURRENDER? SURELY THOU JEST!
TORCHY TOAST SOME A' YER BRAIN CELLS, REED?
WE NEED TO GET TO KANG IN ORDER TO FIND OUT WHERE THE VISION, CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THOR ARE.*
THE EASIEST WAY IS TO LET THEM TAKE US THERE!
BUT WHAT IF WE'RE WINNING--?
THEN THROW THE FIGHT.
SUE--SHIELD DOWN!
HOO BOY.
I SENSE FLUX IN THE ENERGY FIELD! APPARENTLY IT IS WEAKENING!
*MISSING IN CHRONOPOLIS IN CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #11 AND THOR ANNUAL #17.--WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT RALFIE

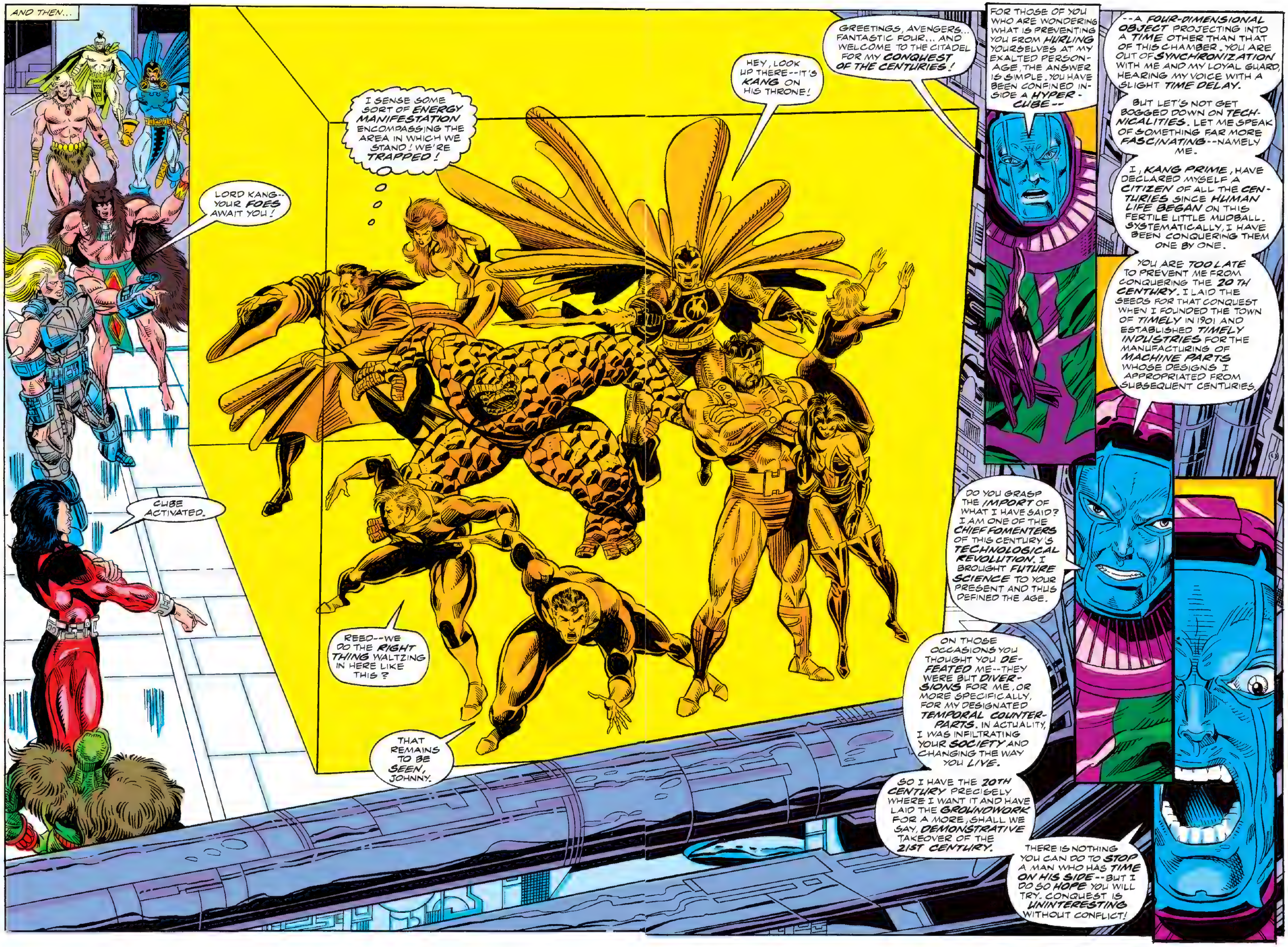

FLAME ON!
WHICH OF THEE IS *MIGHTIEST?* THE PRINCE OF POWER HATH A *GIFT* FOR THEE!
GIVE AS GOOD AS YOU *GET!*
THE STRETCHING ONE--
--APPEARS TO BE THEIR *SHAMAN!*
HE IS *MINE!*
HEY, SPARTACUS-- I WOULDN'T COME ANY *CLOSER*--
--UNLESS YOU WANT TO GET YOURSELF ON *FIRE!*
I HAVE BEEN IMMERSED IN THE RIVER *STYX.* I AM *IMMUNE* TO ALL BODILY HARM, *FIRE-DEMON!*

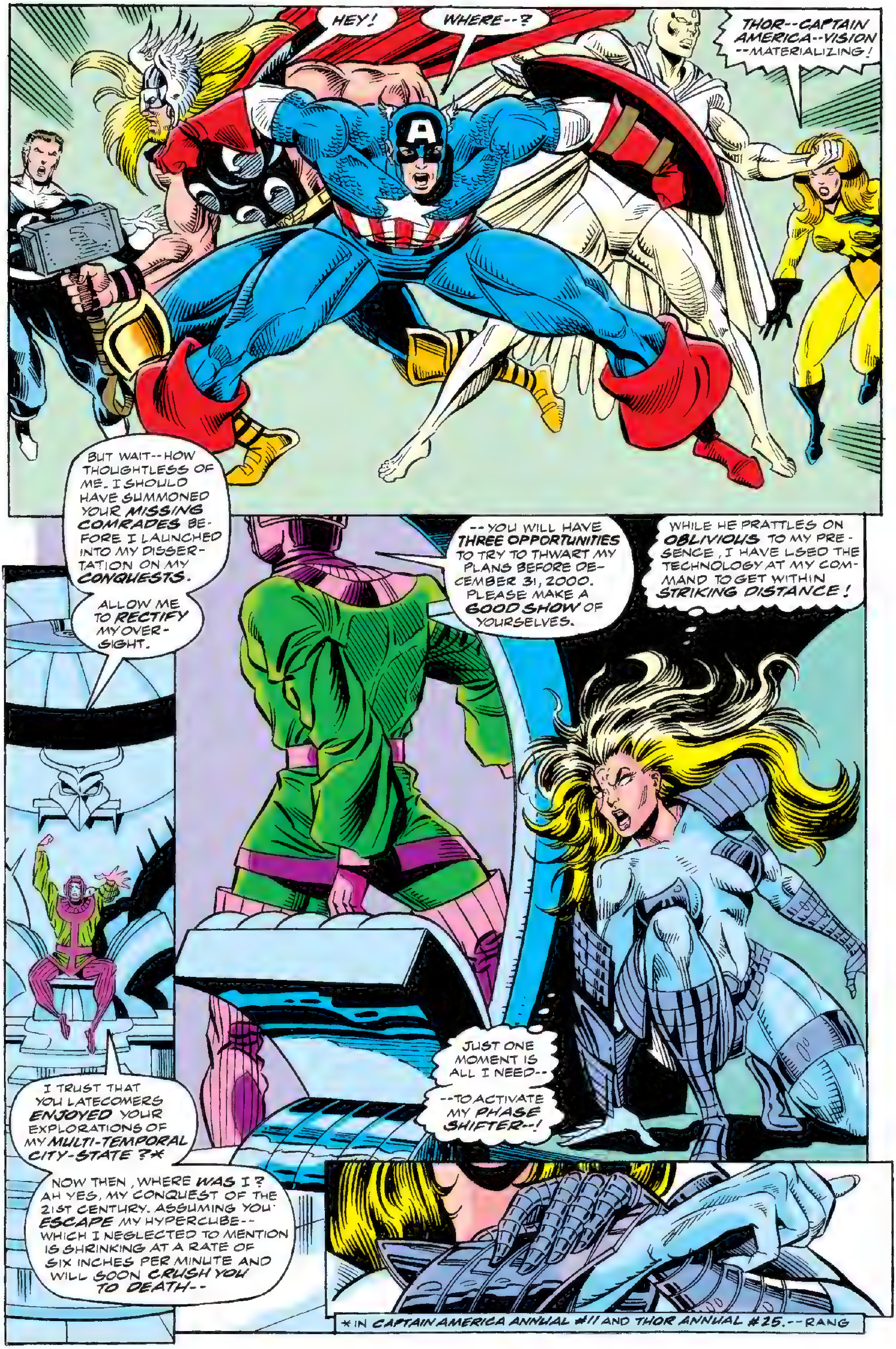
YOU SSSHALL FEEL THE BITE OF MY BLADE, MAMMAL!
NO THANKS, LIZARD!
NOT LIZARD--SSERPENT!
LIKE I CARE!
THAT'S THE EBONY BLADE YOU'RE SWINGING, MISTER!
YES! YOU KNOW OF IT?
I SURE DO. I'M THE BLACK KNIGHT OF THE LATE 20TH CENTURY!
ARE YOU NOW? I AM THE BLACK KNIGHT OF THE 7TH CENTURY--
--THE FIRST TO WIELD THE DARK SWORD AFTER SIR PERCY!
THEN YOU'RE MY DISTANT ANCESTOR! WHY DO YOU SERVE KANG? HE'S EVIL!
NOT EVIL--AMBITIOUS! AS AM I! PERCY WAS A FOP AND A FOOL!
ZZAP
YOU HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF A MONSTER FROM HELLGATE, YET I UNDERSTAND YOU ORIGINATE IN THE CENTURY BEFORE MINE.
NO MATTER! A PLASMA BLAST WILL SUBDUE YOU AS IT DOES THEM.

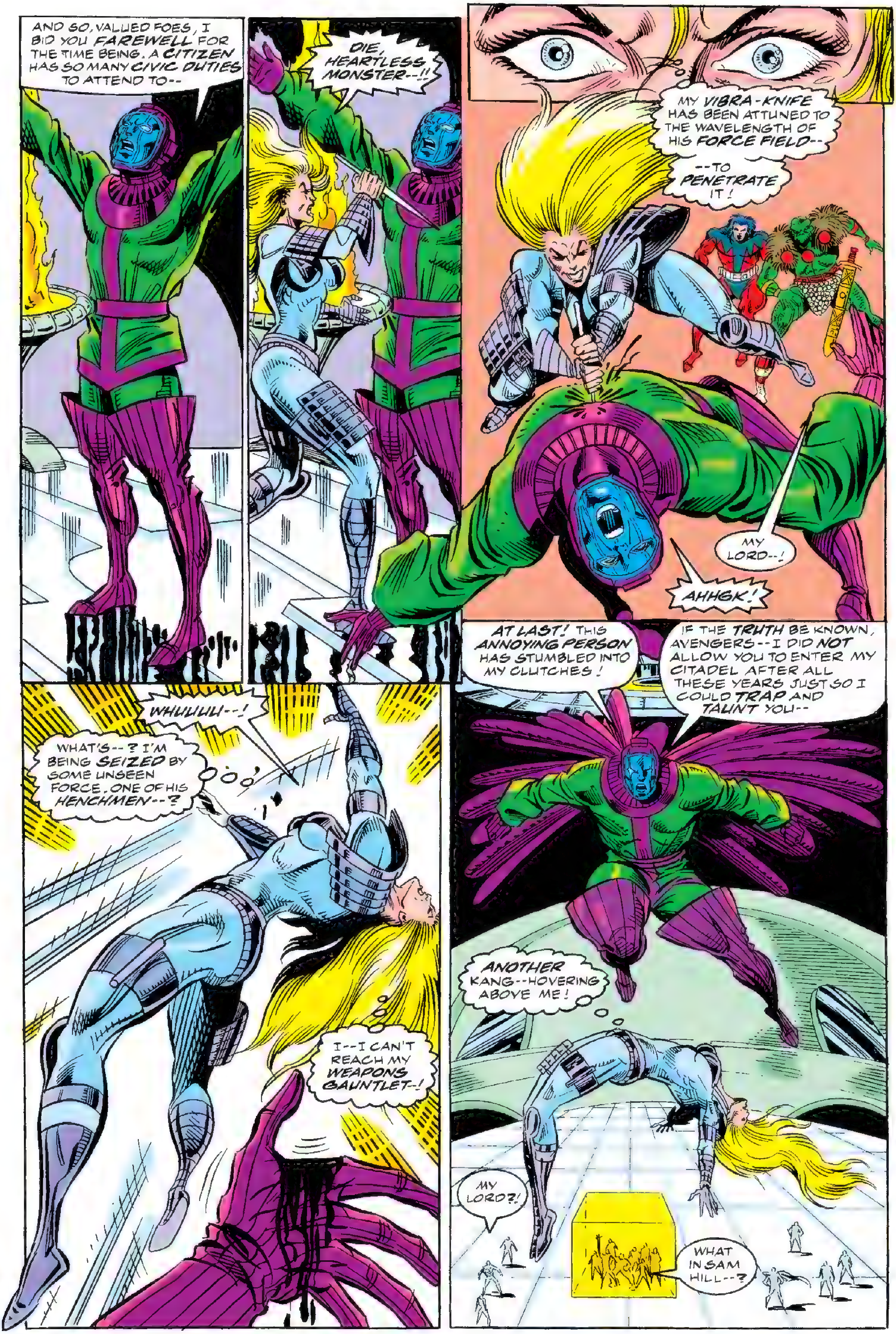
YOWTCH! YOU GOT ME RIGHT IN THE EYE WITH THAT RAY GUN O' YERS!
THAT REALLY HONKS ME OFF, PAL!
C'MERE, YOU!
NOBODY DOES THAT TO THE EVER-LOVIN' THING AN GETS AWAY WITH IT! NOBODY NOHOW NOWHEN!
INVISIBLE WOMAN-- GET THEE INVISIBLE!
YON FLYING MAN BESIEGES US!
THE NAME IS APOCRYPHUS, GODLING. I AM THE LAST AND MIGHTIEST OF THE EARTH ETERNALS!
IN MY FAR-FLUNG ERA, YOUR STRENGTH IS LEGENDARY--
--AS IS YOUR CLUMSINESS!
HERCULES! LOOK OUT! HE'S--
BLOOM
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO KILL A LEGEND!
KNAVE! THOU THINKEST THE PRINCE OF POWER FEARS HEIGHTS?!?
ENCASED HIM IN A BALL OF FORCE!
WHOAAAAAA

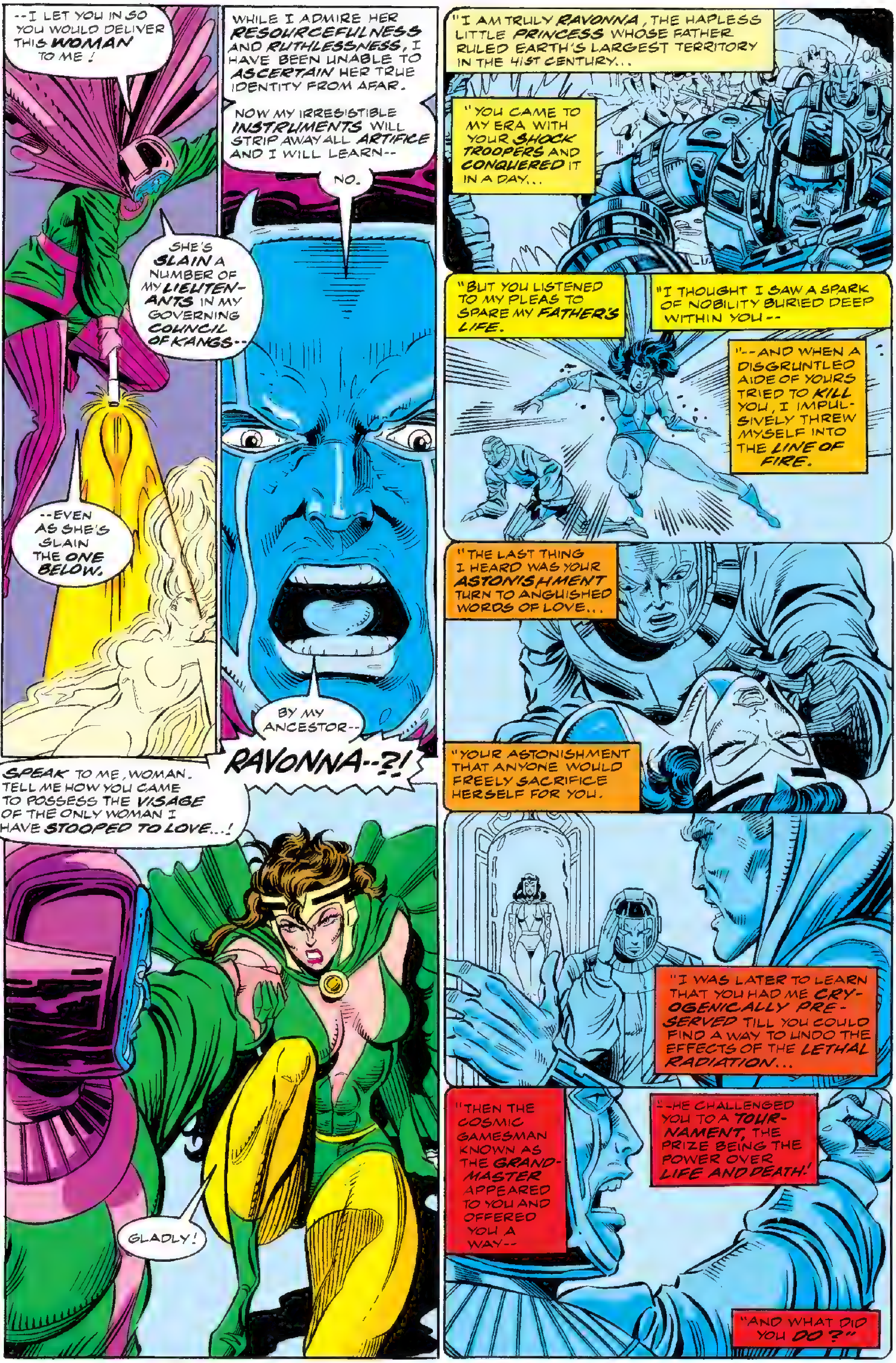

I'M TRYING TO KEEP HIM OFF BALANCE BY WHIPPING UP DUST STORMS AND TREMORS--
--BUT I SURE WISH DRUID WOULD SIGNAL SURRENDER ALREADY!
YOUR CONTORTIONS MAKE YOU APPEAR RIDICULOUS, SHAMAN!
PERHAPS, BUT YOU MUST ADMIT YOUR WEAPONS ARE USELESS AGAINST SOMEONE AS PLIANT AS ME!
WE MUST SURRENDER OR THIS CAVE-MAN WILL IMPALE ME!
STOP!

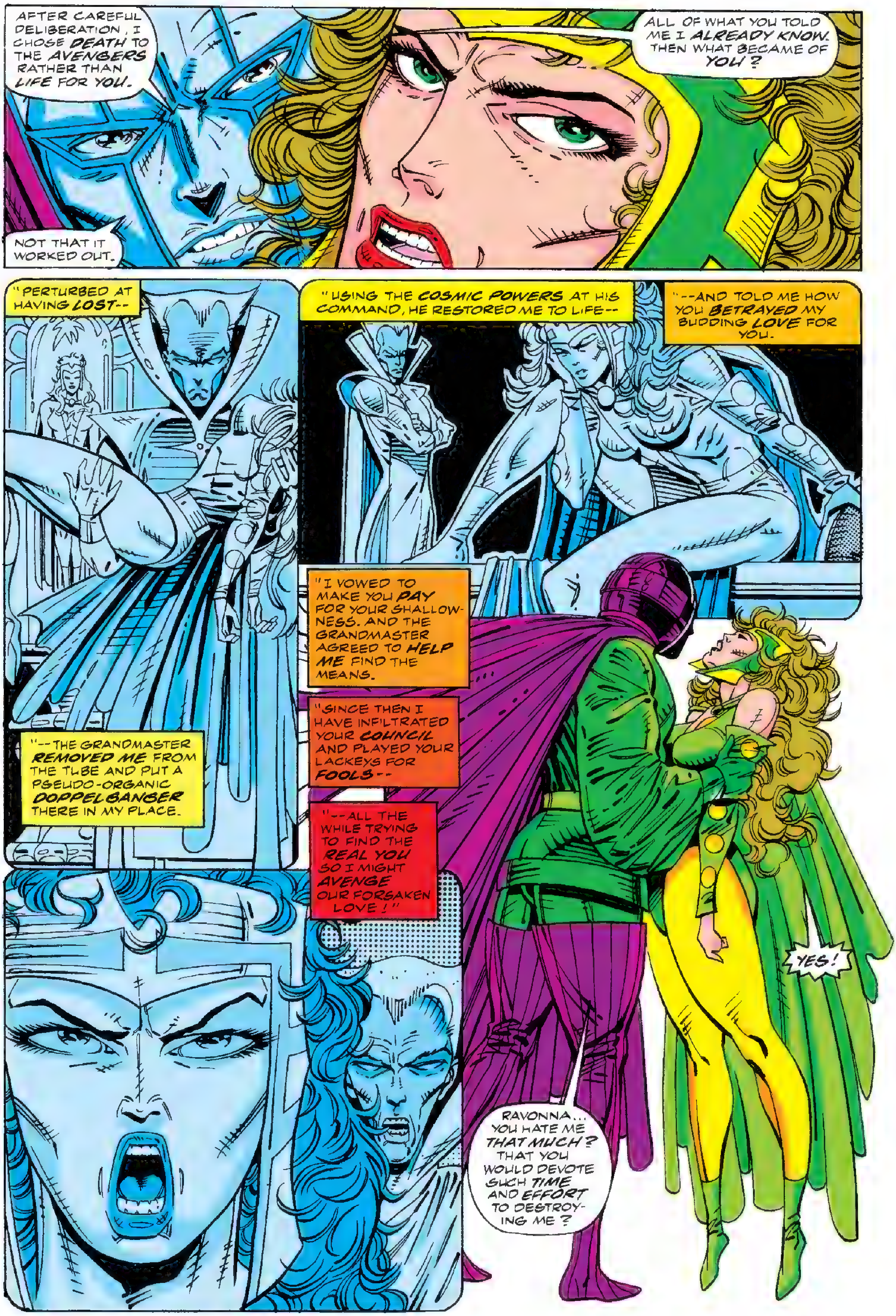

THERE'S THE SIGNAL, SPOILIN' ALL THE *FUN!*
ASTOUNDING! THAT PRIMITIVE COULD HAVE SUBDUED *SERSI!*
UNLESS SHE BE *FEIGNING* DEFEAT.
I COULD *SAVE* THE DOC--WITH A SINGLE *FIREBALL!*
NO, JOHNNY-- REMEMBER THE *PLAN!*
ALL RIGHT, WE ALL *SURRENDER!* DON'T KILL HIM!
YOUR DEFEAT WAS *INEVITABLE.*
IN *CHRONOPOLIS,* KANG CONTROLS *ALL!*
STAND BACK. I WILL ACTIVATE THE *TEMPORTAL!*
NOW, AVENGERS, MARCH INTO THE *GLOWING CIRCLE.* STEP LIVELY! WE WILL BE RIGHT *BEHIND* YOU!
I DON'T THINK THIS IS SUCH A *HOT PLAN.* WHO *KNOWS* WHAT KIND OF *TRAP* IS WAITING FOR US ON THE *OTHER SIDE* OF THIS THING?
I COULD FLY AWAY IN A *SECOND*--NAH. IT'D JUST LOOK LIKE I WAS *CHICKEN.*

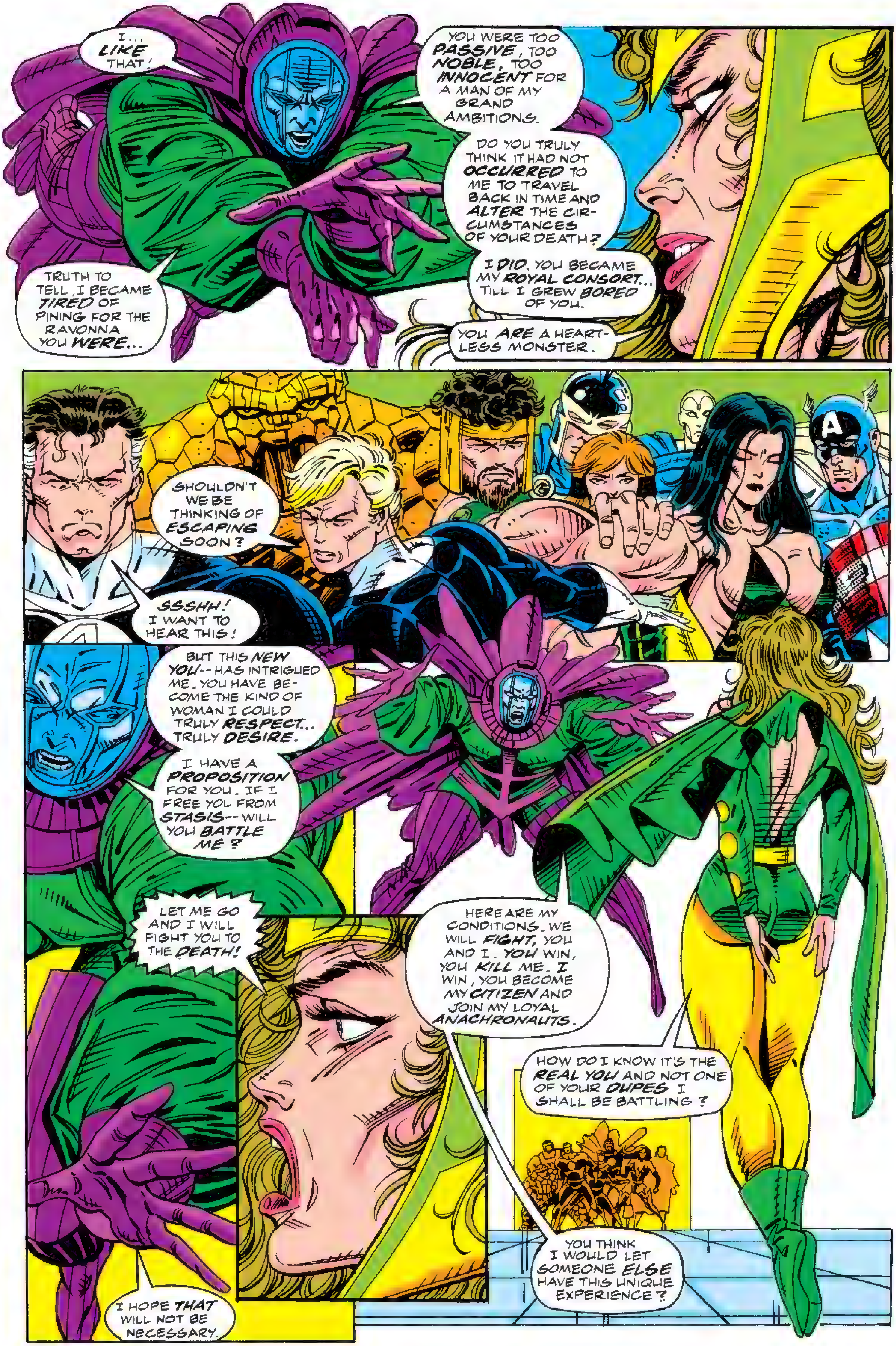

AND THEN...
LORD KANG-- YOUR FOES AWAIT YOU!
CUBE ACTIVATED.
I SENSE SOME SORT OF ENERGY MANIFESTATION ENCOMPASSING THE AREA IN WHICH WE STAND! WE'RE TRAPPED!
HEY, LOOK UP THERE--IT'S KANG ON HIS THRONE!
GREETINGS, AVENGERS... FANTASTIC FOUR... AND WELCOME TO THE CITADEL FOR MY CONQUEST OF THE CENTURIES!
FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE WONDERING WHAT IS PREVENTING YOU FROM HURLING YOURSELVES AT MY EXALTED PERSONAGE, THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE. YOU HAVE BEEN CONFINED INSIDE A HYPER-CUBE--
--A FOUR-DIMENSIONAL OBJECT PROJECTING INTO A TIME OTHER THAN THAT OF THIS CHAMBER. YOU ARE OUT OF SYNCHRONIZATION WITH ME AND MY LOYAL GUARD, HEARING MY VOICE WITH A SLIGHT TIME DELAY.
BUT LET'S NOT GET BOGGED DOWN ON TECHNICALITIES. LET ME SPEAK OF SOMETHING FAR MORE FASCINATING--NAMELY ME.
I, KANG PRIME, HAVE DECLARED MYSELF A CITIZEN OF ALL THE CENTURIES SINCE HUMAN LIFE BEGAN ON THIS FERTILE LITTLE MUDBALL. SYSTEMATICALLY, I HAVE BEEN CONQUERING THEM ONE BY ONE.
YOU ARE TOO LATE TO PREVENT ME FROM CONQUERING THE 20TH CENTURY. I LAID THE SEEDS FOR THAT CONQUEST WHEN I FOUNDED THE TOWN OF TIMELY IN 1901 AND ESTABLISHED TIMELY INDUSTRIES FOR THE MANUFACTURING OF MACHINE PARTS WHOSE DESIGNS I APPROPRIATED FROM SUBSEQUENT CENTURIES.
DO YOU GRASP THE IMPORT OF WHAT I HAVE SAID? I AM ONE OF THE CHIEF FOMENTERS OF THIS CENTURY'S TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION. I BROUGHT FUTURE SCIENCE TO YOUR PRESENT AND THUS DEFINED THE AGE.
ON THOSE OCCASIONS YOU THOUGHT YOU DEFEATED ME--THEY WERE BUT DIVERSIONS FOR ME, OR MORE SPECIFICALLY, FOR MY DESIGNATED TEMPORAL COUNTERPARTS. IN ACTUALITY, I WAS INFILTRATING YOUR SOCIETY AND CHANGING THE WAY YOU LIVE.
SO I HAVE THE 20TH CENTURY PRECISELY WHERE I WANT IT AND HAVE LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR A MORE, SHALL WE SAY, DEMONSTRATIVE TAKEOVER OF THE 21ST CENTURY.
THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP A MAN WHO HAS TIME ON HIS SIDE--BUT I DO SO HOPE YOU WILL TRY. CONQUEST IS UNINTERESTING WITHOUT CONFLICT!
REED--WE DO THE RIGHT THING WALTZING IN HERE LIKE THIS?
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, JOHNNY.

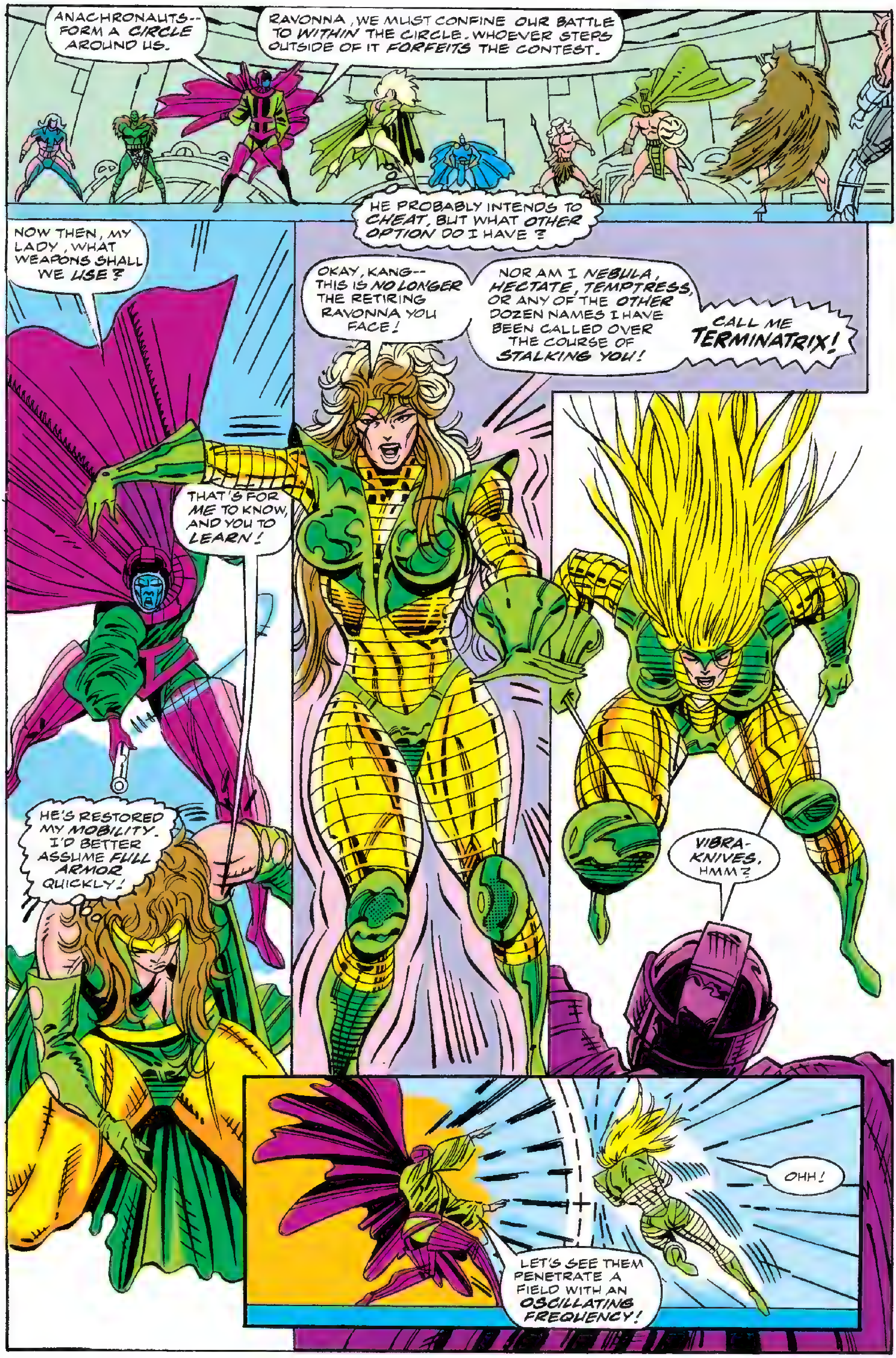

HEY!
WHERE--?
THOR--CAPTAIN AMERICA--VISION --MATERIALIZING!
BUT WAIT--HOW THOUGHTLESS OF ME. I SHOULD HAVE SUMMONED YOUR **MISSING COMRADES** BEFORE I LAUNCHED INTO MY DISSERTATION ON MY **CONQUESTS**.
ALLOW ME TO **RECTIFY** MY OVERSIGHT.
I TRUST THAT YOU LATECOMERS **ENJOYED** YOUR EXPLORATIONS OF MY **MULTI-TEMPORAL CITY-STATE?***
NOW THEN, WHERE **WAS** I? AH YES, MY CONQUEST OF THE 21st CENTURY. ASSUMING YOU **ESCAPE** MY HYPERCUBE--WHICH I NEGLECTED TO MENTION IS SHRINKING AT A RATE OF SIX INCHES PER MINUTE AND WILL SOON **CRUSH YOU TO DEATH**--
--YOU WILL HAVE **THREE OPPORTUNITIES** TO TRY TO THWART MY PLANS BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2000. PLEASE MAKE A **GOOD SHOW** OF YOURSELVES.
WHILE HE PRATTLES ON **OBLIVIOUS** TO MY PRESENCE, I HAVE USED THE TECHNOLOGY AT MY COMMAND TO GET WITHIN **STRIKING DISTANCE**!
JUST ONE MOMENT IS ALL I NEED--
--TO ACTIVATE MY **PHASE SHIFTER**--!
*IN **CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #11** AND **THOR ANNUAL #25**.--RANG

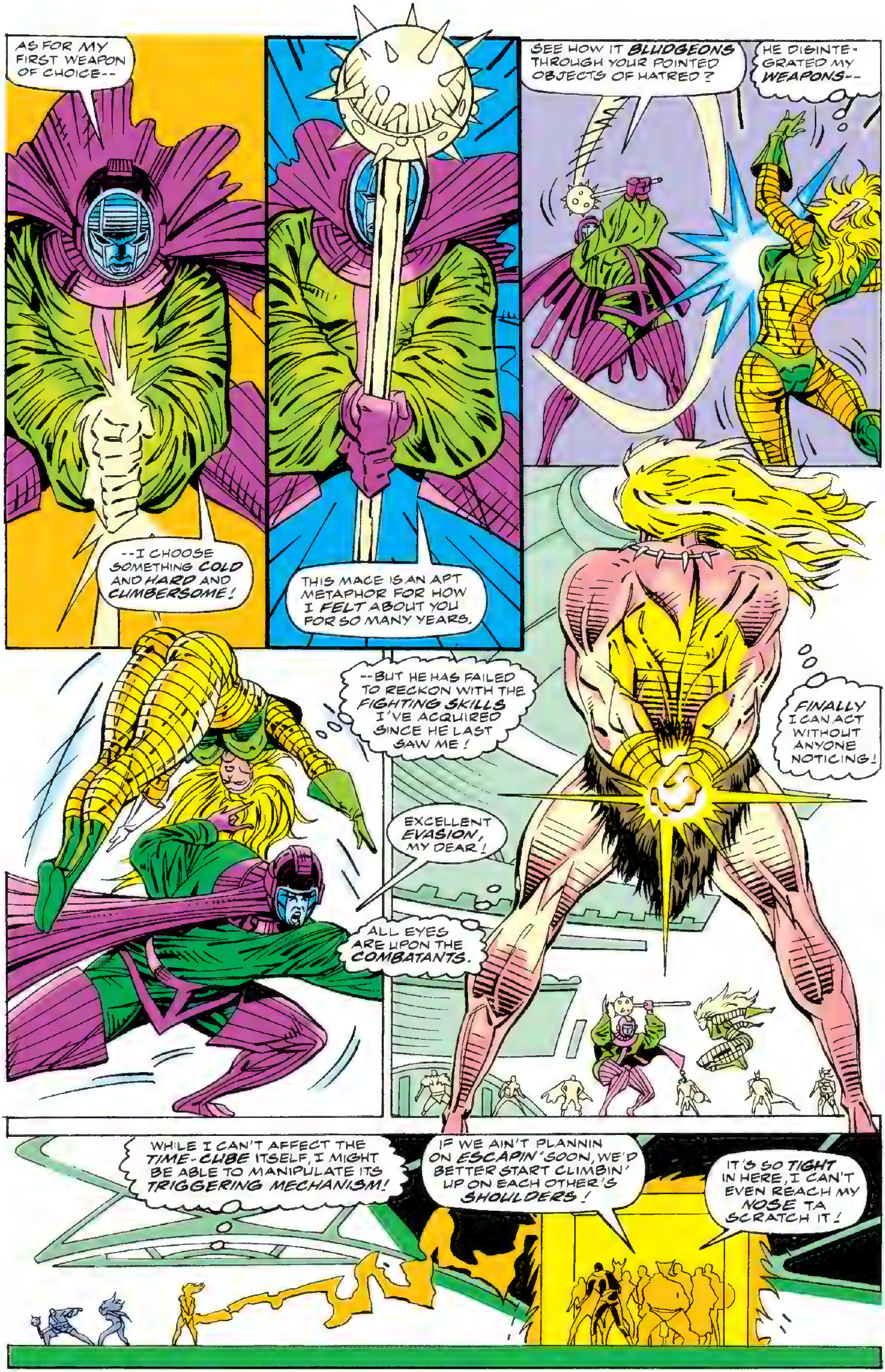

AND SO, VALUED FOES, I BID YOU *FAREWELL* FOR THE TIME BEING. A *CITIZEN* HAS SO MANY *CIVIC DUTIES* TO ATTEND TO--
DIE, HEARTLESS MONSTER--!!
MY *VIBRA-KNIFE* HAS BEEN ATTUNED TO THE WAVELENGTH OF HIS *FORCE FIELD--*
--TO *PENETRATE* IT!
MY LORD--!
AHHGK!
WHUUUU--!
WHAT'S--? I'M BEING *SEIZED* BY SOME UNSEEN FORCE. ONE OF HIS *HENCHMEN--?*
I--I CAN'T REACH MY *WEAPONS GAUNTLET--!*
AT LAST! THIS *ANNOYING PERSON* HAS STUMBLED INTO MY CLUTCHES!
IF THE *TRUTH* BE KNOWN, AVENGERS--I DID *NOT* ALLOW YOU TO ENTER MY CITADEL AFTER ALL THESE YEARS JUST SO I COULD *TRAP* AND *TAUNT* YOU--
ANOTHER KANG--HOVERING ABOVE ME!
MY LORD?!
WHAT IN SAM HILL--?

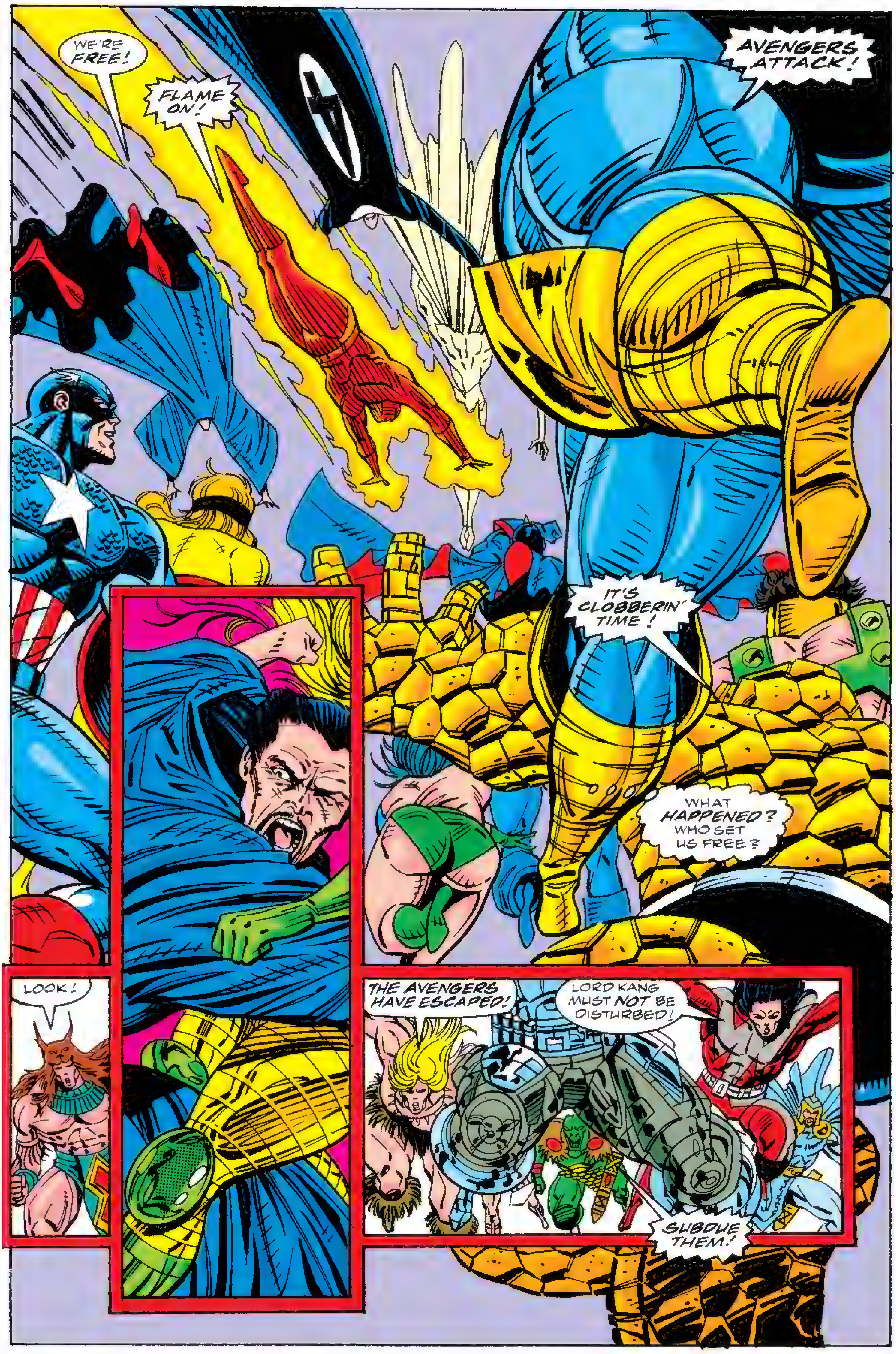

--I LET YOU IN SO YOU WOULD DELIVER THIS WOMAN TO ME!
WHILE I ADMIRE HER RESOURCEFULNESS AND RUTHLESSNESS, I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO ASCERTAIN HER TRUE IDENTITY FROM AFAR.
NOW MY IRRESISTIBLE INSTRUMENTS WILL STRIP AWAY ALL ARTIFICE AND I WILL LEARN--
NO.
SHE'S SLAIN A NUMBER OF MY LIEUTENANTS IN MY GOVERNING COUNCIL OF KANGS--
--EVEN AS SHE'S SLAIN THE ONE BELOW.
BY MY ANCESTOR--
RAVONNA--?!
SPEAK TO ME, WOMAN. TELL ME HOW YOU CAME TO POSSESS THE VISAGE OF THE ONLY WOMAN I HAVE STOOPED TO LOVE...!
GLADLY!
"I AM TRULY RAVONNA, THE HAPLESS LITTLE PRINCESS WHOSE FATHER RULED EARTH'S LARGEST TERRITORY IN THE 41ST CENTURY...
"YOU CAME TO MY ERA WITH YOUR SHOCK TROOPERS AND CONQUERED IT IN A DAY...
"BUT YOU LISTENED TO MY PLEAS TO SPARE MY FATHER'S LIFE.
"I THOUGHT I SAW A SPARK OF NOBILITY BURIED DEEP WITHIN YOU--
"--AND WHEN A DISGRUNTLED AIDE OF YOURS TRIED TO KILL YOU, I IMPULSIVELY THREW MYSELF INTO THE LINE OF FIRE.
"THE LAST THING I HEARD WAS YOUR ASTONISHMENT TURN TO ANGUISHED WORDS OF LOVE...
"YOUR ASTONISHMENT THAT ANYONE WOULD FREELY SACRIFICE HERSELF FOR YOU.
"I WAS LATER TO LEARN THAT YOU HAD ME CRYOGENICALLY PRESERVED TILL YOU COULD FIND A WAY TO UNDO THE EFFECTS OF THE LETHAL RADIATION...
"THEN THE COSMIC GAMESMAN KNOWN AS THE GRANDMASTER APPEARED TO YOU AND OFFERED YOU A WAY--
"--HE CHALLENGED YOU TO A TOURNAMENT, THE PRIZE BEING THE POWER OVER LIFE AND DEATH!
"AND WHAT DID YOU DO?"

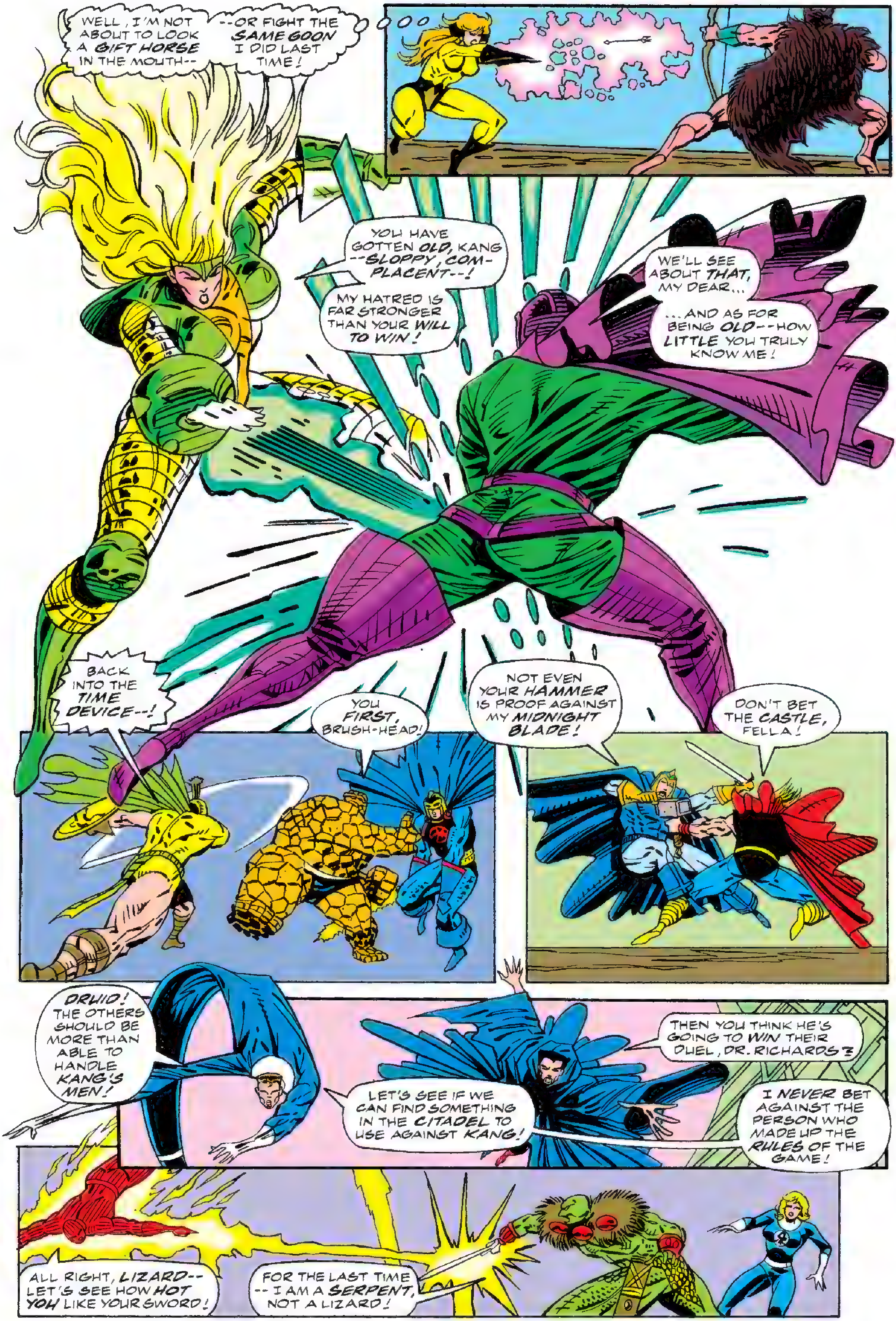

AFTER CAREFUL DELIBERATION, I CHOSE DEATH TO THE AVENGERS RATHER THAN LIFE FOR YOU.
NOT THAT IT WORKED OUT.
ALL OF WHAT YOU TOLD ME I ALREADY KNOW. THEN WHAT BECAME OF YOU?
"PERTURBED AT HAVING LOST--
"--THE GRANDMASTER REMOVED ME FROM THE TUBE AND PUT A PSEUDO-ORGANIC DOPPELGANGER THERE IN MY PLACE.
"USING THE COSMIC POWERS AT HIS COMMAND, HE RESTORED ME TO LIFE--
"--AND TOLD ME HOW YOU BETRAYED MY BUDDING LOVE FOR YOU.
"I VOWED TO MAKE YOU PAY FOR YOUR SHALLOWNESS. AND THE GRANDMASTER AGREED TO HELP ME FIND THE MEANS.
"SINCE THEN I HAVE INFILTRATED YOUR COUNCIL AND PLAYED YOUR LACKEYS FOR FOOLS--
"--ALL THE WHILE TRYING TO FIND THE REAL YOU SO I MIGHT AVENGE OUR FORSAKEN LOVE!"
YES!
RAVONNA... YOU HATE ME THAT MUCH? THAT YOU WOULD DEVOTE SUCH TIME AND EFFORT TO DESTROYING ME?

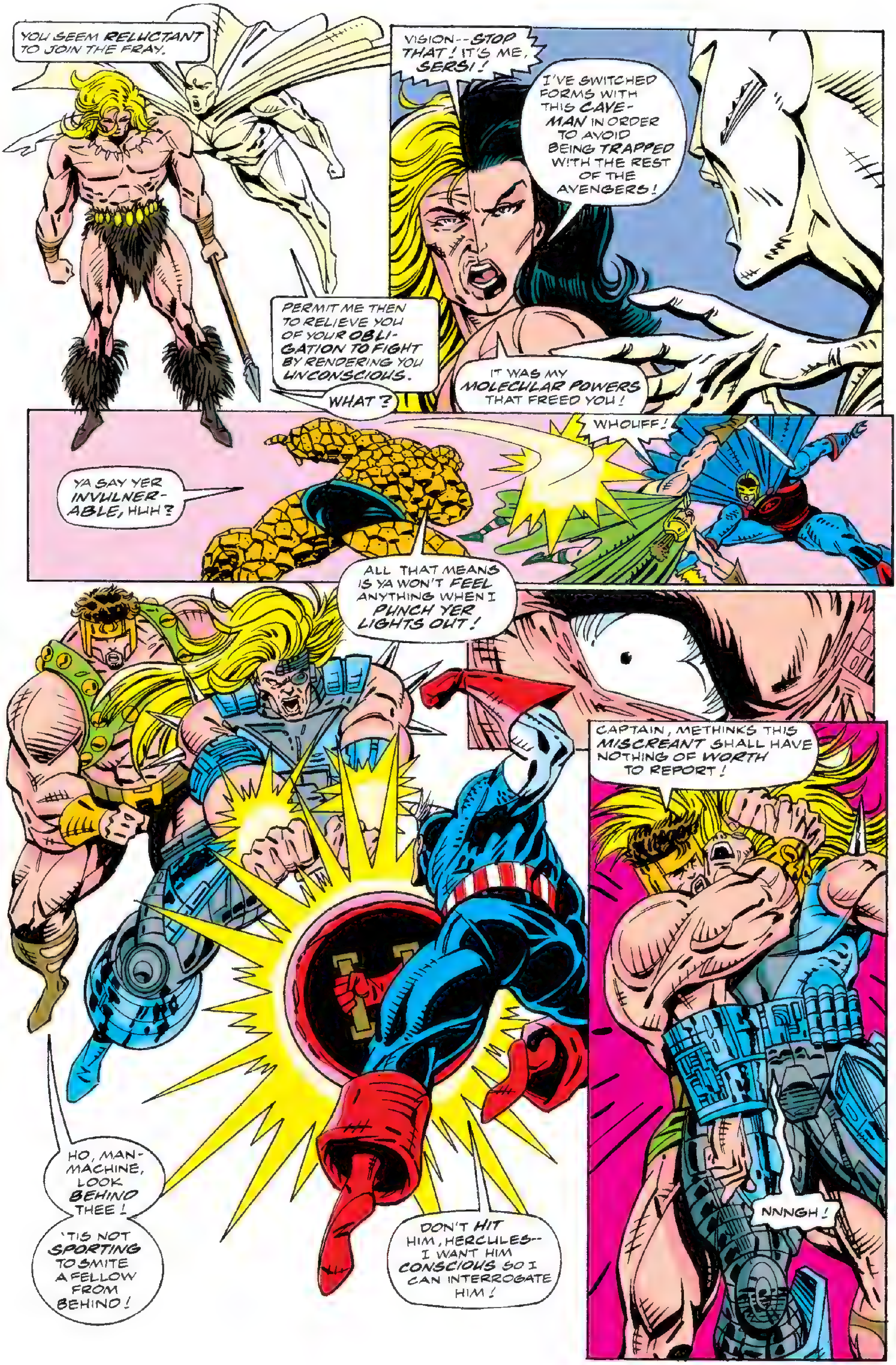

I... *LIKE* THAT!
TRUTH TO TELL, I BECAME *TIRED* OF PINING FOR THE RAVONNA YOU *WERE*...
YOU WERE TOO *PASSIVE*, TOO *NOBLE*, TOO *INNOCENT* FOR A MAN OF MY GRAND AMBITIONS.
DO YOU TRULY THINK IT HAD NOT *OCCURRED* TO ME TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME AND *ALTER* THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR DEATH?
I *DID*. YOU BECAME MY *ROYAL CONSORT*... TILL I GREW *BORED* OF YOU.
YOU *ARE* A HEARTLESS MONSTER.
SHOULDN'T WE BE THINKING OF *ESCAPING* SOON?
SSSHH! I WANT TO HEAR THIS!
BUT THIS *NEW YOU*--HAS INTRIGUED ME. YOU HAVE BECOME THE KIND OF WOMAN I COULD TRULY *RESPECT*... TRULY *DESIRE*.
I HAVE A *PROPOSITION* FOR YOU. IF I FREE YOU FROM *STASIS*--WILL YOU *BATTLE ME*?
LET ME GO AND I WILL FIGHT YOU TO THE *DEATH!*
I HOPE *THAT* WILL NOT BE NECESSARY.
HERE ARE MY CONDITIONS. WE WILL *FIGHT*, YOU AND I. *YOU* WIN, YOU *KILL ME*. *I* WIN, YOU BECOME MY *CITIZEN* AND JOIN MY LOYAL *ANACHRONAUTS*.
HOW DO I KNOW IT'S THE *REAL YOU* AND NOT ONE OF YOUR *DUPES* I SHALL BE BATTLING?
YOU THINK I WOULD LET SOMEONE *ELSE* HAVE THIS UNIQUE EXPERIENCE?

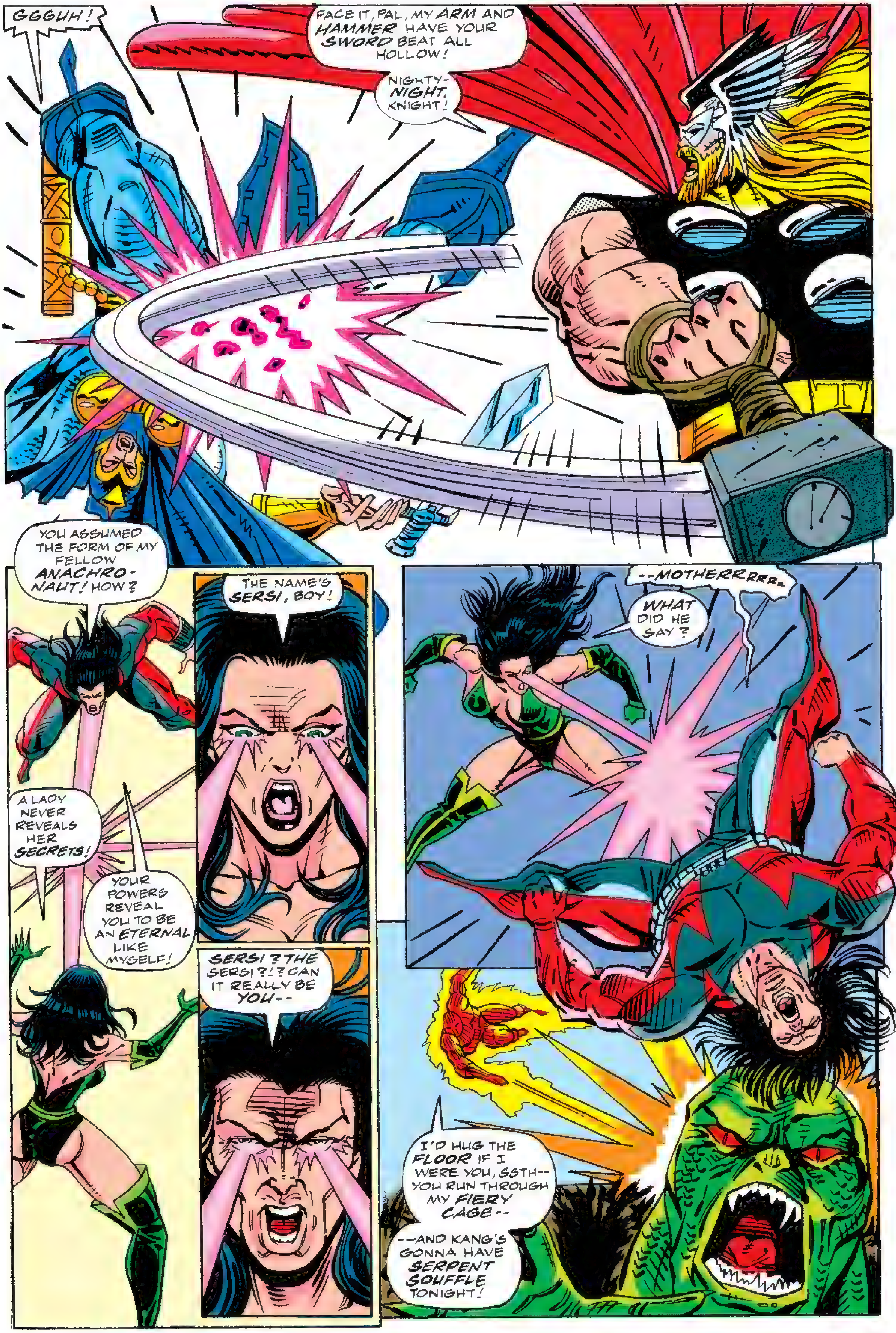

ANACHRONAUTS-- FORM A CIRCLE AROUND US.
RAVONNA, WE MUST CONFINE OUR BATTLE TO WITHIN THE CIRCLE. WHOEVER STEPS OUTSIDE OF IT FORFEITS THE CONTEST.
HE PROBABLY INTENDS TO CHEAT. BUT WHAT OTHER OPTION DO I HAVE?
NOW THEN, MY LADY, WHAT WEAPONS SHALL WE USE?
THAT'S FOR ME TO KNOW, AND YOU TO LEARN!
HE'S RESTORED MY MOBILITY. I'D BETTER ASSUME FULL ARMOR QUICKLY!
OKAY, KANG-- THIS IS NO LONGER THE RETIRING RAVONNA YOU FACE!
NOR AM I NEBULA, HECTATE, TEMPTRESS, OR ANY OF THE OTHER DOZEN NAMES I HAVE BEEN CALLED OVER THE COURSE OF STALKING YOU!
CALL ME TERMINATRIX!
VIBRA-KNIVES, HMM?
OHH!
LET'S SEE THEM PENETRATE A FIELD WITH AN OSCILLATING FREQUENCY!


AS FOR MY FIRST WEAPON OF CHOICE--
--I CHOOSE SOMETHING COLD AND HARD AND CUMBERSOME!
THIS MACE IS AN APT METAPHOR FOR HOW I FELT ABOUT YOU FOR SO MANY YEARS.
SEE HOW IT BLUDGEONS THROUGH YOUR POINTED OBJECTS OF HATRED?
HE DISINTEGRATED MY WEAPONS--
--BUT HE HAS FAILED TO RECKON WITH THE FIGHTING SKILLS I'VE ACQUIRED SINCE HE LAST SAW ME!
EXCELLENT EVASION, MY DEAR!
ALL EYES ARE UPON THE COMBATANTS.
FINALLY I CAN ACT WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING!
WHILE I CAN'T AFFECT THE TIME-CUBE ITSELF, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE ITS TRIGGERING MECHANISM!
IF WE AIN'T PLANNIN ON ESCAPIN' SOON, WE'D BETTER START CLIMBIN' UP ON EACH OTHER'S SHOULDERS!
IT'S SO TIGHT IN HERE, I CAN'T EVEN REACH MY NOSE TA SCRATCH IT!

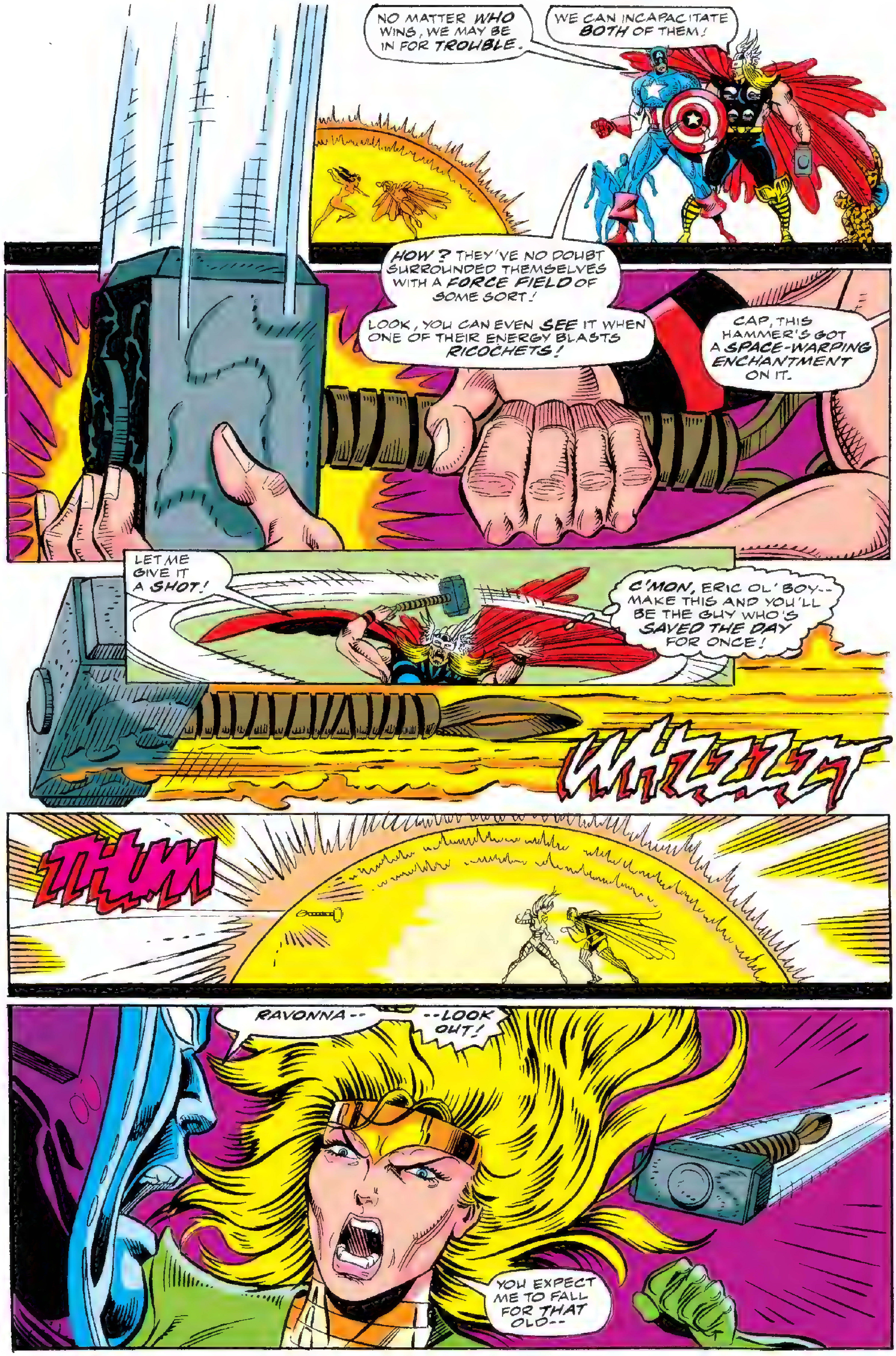

WE'RE FREE!
FLAME ON!
AVENGERS ATTACK!
IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
WHAT HAPPENED? WHO SET US FREE?
LOOK!
THE AVENGERS HAVE ESCAPED!
LORD KANG MUST NOT BE DISTURBED!
SUBDUE THEM!

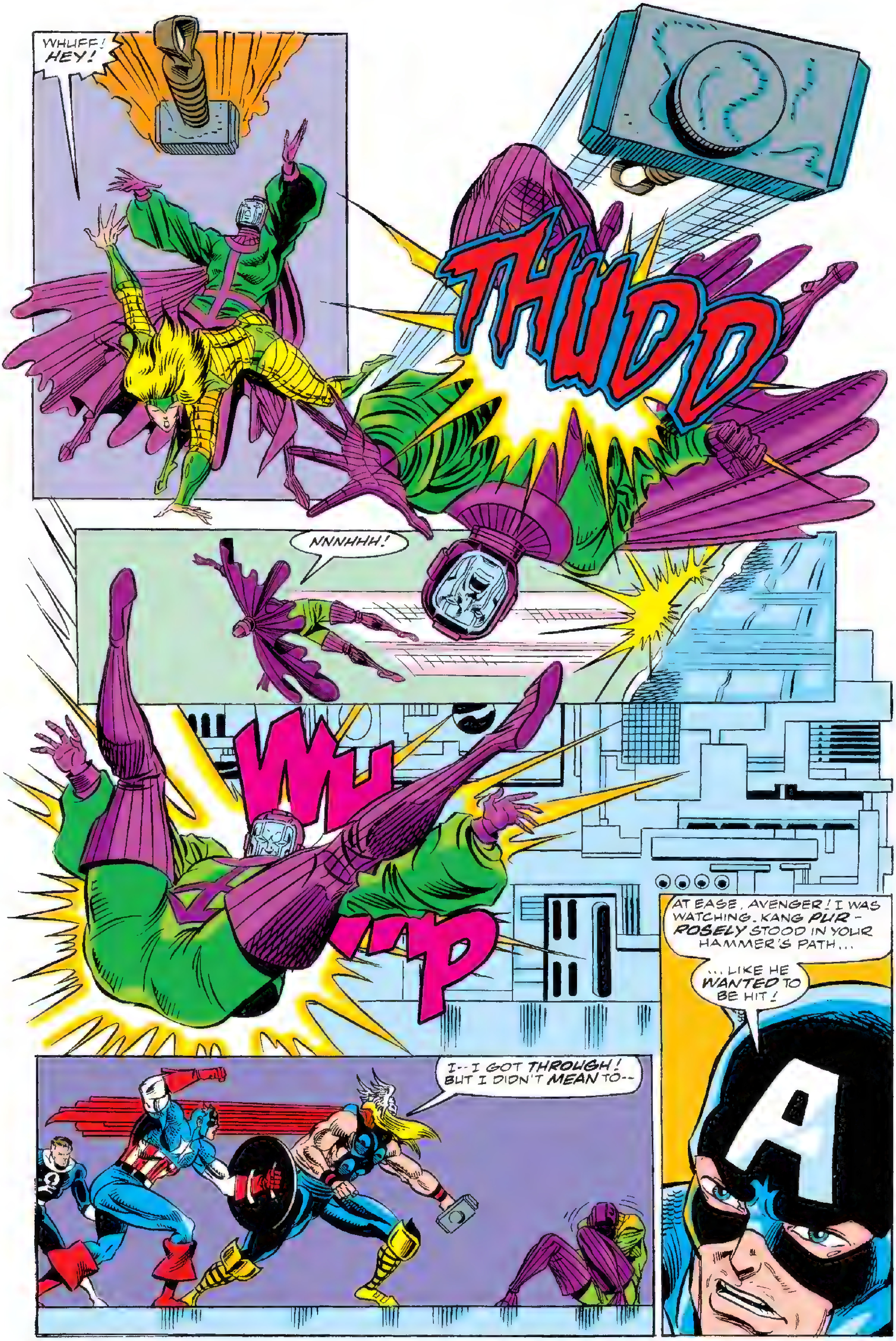

WELL, I'M NOT ABOUT TO LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH--
--OR FIGHT THE SAME GOON I DID LAST TIME!
YOU HAVE GOTTEN OLD, KANG --SLOPPY, COMPLACENT--!
MY HATRED IS FAR STRONGER THAN YOUR WILL TO WIN!
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, MY DEAR...
...AND AS FOR BEING OLD--HOW LITTLE YOU TRULY KNOW ME!
BACK INTO THE TIME DEVICE--!
YOU FIRST, BRUSH-HEAD!
NOT EVEN YOUR HAMMER IS PROOF AGAINST MY MIDNIGHT BLADE!
DON'T BET THE CASTLE, FELLA!
DRUID! THE OTHERS SHOULD BE MORE THAN ABLE TO HANDLE KANG'S MEN!
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIND SOMETHING IN THE CITADEL TO USE AGAINST KANG!
THEN YOU THINK HE'S GOING TO WIN THEIR DUEL, DR. RICHARDS?
I NEVER BET AGAINST THE PERSON WHO MADE UP THE RULES OF THE GAME!
ALL RIGHT, LIZARD-- LET'S SEE HOW HOT YOU LIKE YOUR SWORD!
FOR THE LAST TIME --I AM A SERPENT, NOT A LIZARD!

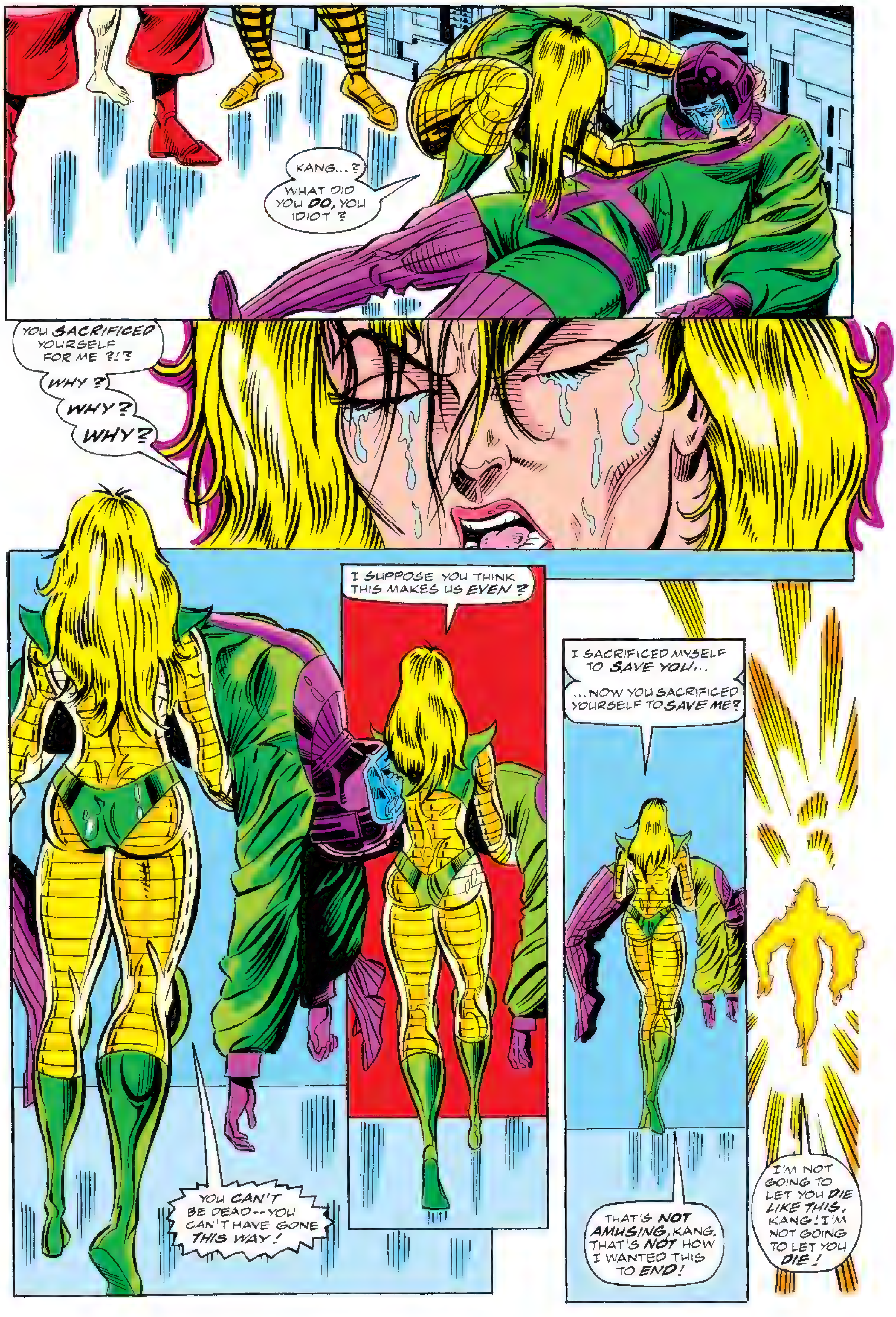

YOU SEEM RELUCTANT TO JOIN THE FRAY.
PERMIT ME THEN TO RELIEVE YOU OF YOUR OBLIGATION TO FIGHT BY RENDERING YOU UNCONSCIOUS.
WHAT?
VISION--STOP THAT! IT'S ME, SERSI!
I'VE SWITCHED FORMS WITH THIS CAVE-MAN IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING TRAPPED WITH THE REST OF THE AVENGERS!
IT WAS MY MOLECULAR POWERS THAT FREED YOU!
YA SAY YER INVULNERABLE, HUH?
WHOUFF!
ALL THAT MEANS IS YA WON'T FEEL ANYTHING WHEN I PUNCH YER LIGHTS OUT!
HO, MAN-MACHINE, LOOK BEHIND THEE!
'TIS NOT SPORTING TO SMITE A FELLOW FROM BEHIND!
DON'T HIT HIM, HERCULES-- I WANT HIM CONSCIOUS SO I CAN INTERROGATE HIM!
CAPTAIN, METHINKS THIS MISCREANT SHALL HAVE NOTHING OF WORTH TO REPORT!
NNNGH!


GGGUH!
FACE IT, PAL, MY ARM AND HAMMER HAVE YOUR SWORD BEAT ALL HOLLOW!
NIGHTY-NIGHT, KNIGHT!
YOU ASSUMED THE FORM OF MY FELLOW ANACHRONAUT! HOW?
THE NAME'S SERSI, BOY!
A LADY NEVER REVEALS HER SECRETS!
YOUR POWERS REVEAL YOU TO BE AN ETERNAL LIKE MYSELF!
SERSI? THE SERSI?!? CAN IT REALLY BE YOU--
--MOTHERRRRRR
WHAT DID HE SAY?
I'D HUG THE FLOOR IF I WERE YOU, SSTH-- YOU RUN THROUGH MY FIERY CAGE--
--AND KANG'S GONNA HAVE SERPENT SOUFFLE TONIGHT!

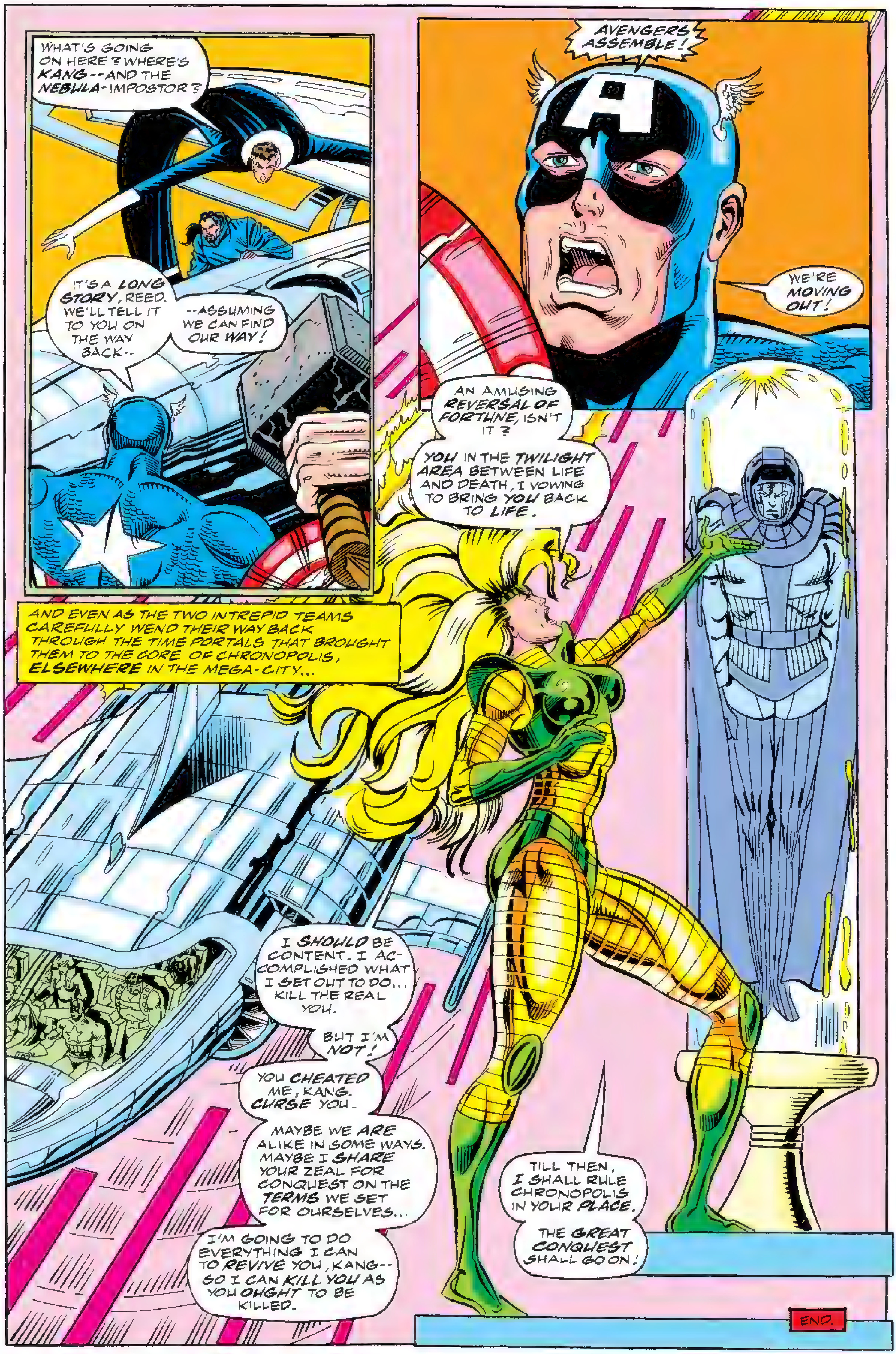
YOUR PRISONERS HAVE *FREED THEMSELVES*, KANG! ANOTHER TESTIMONY TO YOUR *INCOMPETENCE*!
DO NOT LET THEM *CONCERN* YOU, MY DEAR! YOU WILL NEED EVERY IOTA OF YOUR ATTENTION RIVETED UPON ME IF YOU WISH TO *BEST ME*!
YOU SHOULD HAVE *KILLED* THEM WHILE YOU HAD THE CHANCE!
STILL YOU *MISUNDERSTAND* ME. I DO NOT ENJOY *SLAUGHTER*, I ENJOY THE *THRILL OF CONQUEST*!
THERE ARE *ANY NUMBER* OF WAYS I COULD HAVE *DESTROYED THEM*-- OR EVEN *YOU*--
--BUT THEY ARE ALL WAYS *UNBECOMING* A CONQUEROR AS *GIFTED* AS MYSELF!
I COME FROM A *BORING AGE*. I *DETESTED* IT. I DECREED THAT NO CONQUEST I EVER UNDERTAKE BE *BORING*, NOR SHALL ANY PERSON WHO *SERVES* OR *OPPOSES* ME BE *UNWORTHY*!
WHAT ARE YOU *SAYING*? THAT YOU'RE JUST *TOYING* WITH *ME* AND *THEM*? YOU COULD *WIN* ANY TIME YOU WANTED?
BUT OF *COURSE*! ALL TIME PERIODS ARE *PLAYGROUNDS* TO ME--ALL PEOPLE MERELY *PLAYTHINGS*. EVEN *YOU*, MY DEAR!
STOP CALLING ME *YOUR DEAR*! I *HATE* YOU, KANG! I WILL SEE YOU *DEAD*!
THE ANACHRONAUTS ARE ALL UNDER *WRAPS*, CAP--NOW WHAT ABOUT *KANG* AND WHATEVER-SHE'S-CALLING-HERSELF-NOW?
NNNK!
HMMM...


NO MATTER WHO WINS, WE MAY BE IN FOR TROUBLE.
WE CAN INCAPACITATE BOTH OF THEM!
HOW? THEY'VE NO DOUBT SURROUNDED THEMSELVES WITH A FORCE FIELD OF SOME SORT!
LOOK, YOU CAN EVEN SEE IT WHEN ONE OF THEIR ENERGY BLASTS RICOCHETS!
CAP, THIS HAMMER'S GOT A SPACE-WARPING ENCHANTMENT ON IT.
LET ME GIVE IT A SHOT!
C'MON, ERIC OL' BOY-- MAKE THIS AND YOU'LL BE THE GUY WHO'S SAVED THE DAY FOR ONCE!
WHZZZT
THUM
RAVONNA--
--LOOK OUT!
YOU EXPECT ME TO FALL FOR THAT OLD--


WHUFF! *HEY!*
THUDD
NNNHHH!
WUMP
AT EASE, AVENGER! I WAS WATCHING. KANG *PURPOSELY* STOOD IN YOUR HAMMER'S PATH...
...LIKE HE *WANTED* TO BE HIT!
I--I GOT *THROUGH!* BUT I DIDN'T *MEAN* TO--


KANG...? WHAT DID YOU *DO*, YOU IDIOT ?
YOU *SACRIFICED* YOURSELF FOR ME ?!?
WHY ?
WHY?
WHY?
I SUPPOSE YOU THINK THIS MAKES US *EVEN* ?
YOU *CAN'T* BE DEAD--YOU CAN'T HAVE GONE *THIS WAY !*
I SACRIFICED MYSELF TO *SAVE YOU*...
...NOW YOU SACRIFICED YOURSELF TO *SAVE ME*?
THAT'S *NOT AMUSING*, KANG. THAT'S *NOT* HOW I WANTED THIS TO *END !*
I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU *DIE LIKE THIS*, KANG! I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU *DIE !*

WHY'D YOU MOTION FOR US TO *LET HER GO*, CAP?
IF KANG'S *NOT* DEAD... SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WITH THE RESOURCES TO *SAVE HIM!*
I FEEL LIKE I *MESSED UP* AGAIN.
WE'D BETTER SEE WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT GETTING *OUT* OF HERE.
SPLIT INTO *TEAMS OF TWO*, COMB THE ENVIRONS, AND MEET BACK HERE IN *FIFTEEN MINUTES*.
HE'S TECHNICALLY NOT BACK FROM HIS *LEAVE OF ABSENCE*, AND *STILL* HE'S ORDERING US AROUND.
AND...
NO TRACE OF *KANG*, *RAVONNA*, OR ANY DISCERNIBLE *TIME TRAVEL DEVICE*, CAPTAIN.
HMMM. WE'VE SEEN KANG COME BACK FROM MORE *CONVINCING DEATHS* THAN THAT.
WELL, AT THE VERY LEAST WE'VE COMPROMISED KANG'S *HEADQUARTERS*, BEATEN HIS *BEST WARRIORS*, AND LEARNED THE SECRET OF THE *TEMPTRESS!*
NO ONE'S FOUND WHERE *REED* AND *DR. DRUID* SNEAKED OFF TO DURING THE FIGHT. YOU THINK WE SHOULD BE *WORRIED*, CAP?
I WOULDN'T GIVE UP *HOPE*, SUSAN.
WAIT-- WHAT'S THAT *SOUND?*
THE *QUINJET*-- WITH THE *TIME SLED* STRAPPED TO ITS FUSELAGE!
THEN THEY WEREN'T *MESSED UP* BY THAT FLYIN' *SCRAP SHIP!* *
*IN FF ANNUAL #25. --RALF HEAP

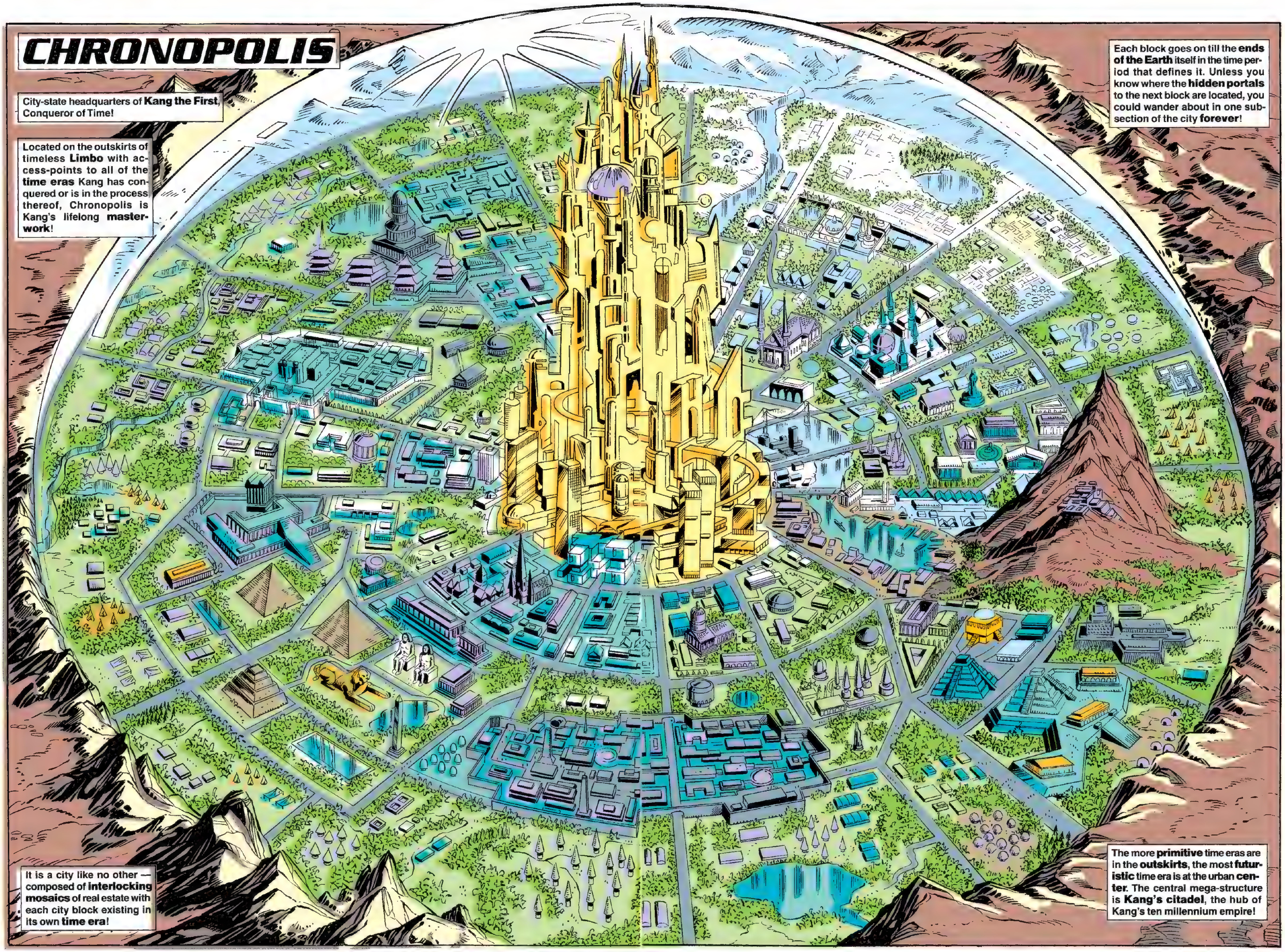

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHERE'S **KANG**--AND THE **NEBULA**-IMPOSTOR?
IT'S A **LONG STORY**, REED. WE'LL TELL IT TO YOU ON THE WAY BACK--
--ASSUMING WE CAN FIND OUR **WAY**!
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
WE'RE **MOVING OUT**!
AND EVEN AS THE TWO INTREPID TEAMS CAREFULLY WEND THEIR WAY BACK THROUGH THE TIME PORTALS THAT BROUGHT THEM TO THE CORE OF CHRONOPOLIS, **ELSEWHERE** IN THE MEGA-CITY...
AN AMUSING **REVERSAL OF FORTUNE**, ISN'T IT?
YOU IN THE **TWILIGHT AREA** BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, I VOWING TO BRING **YOU** BACK TO **LIFE**.
I **SHOULD** BE CONTENT. I ACCOMPLISHED WHAT I SET OUT TO DO... KILL THE REAL YOU.
BUT I'M **NOT**!
YOU **CHEATED** ME, KANG. **CURSE** YOU.
MAYBE WE **ARE** ALIKE IN SOME WAYS. MAYBE I **SHARE** YOUR ZEAL FOR CONQUEST ON THE **TERMS** WE SET FOR OURSELVES...
I'M GOING TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO **REVIVE** YOU, KANG--SO I CAN **KILL YOU** AS YOU **OUGHT** TO BE KILLED.
TILL THEN, **I SHALL RULE** CHRONOPOLIS IN YOUR **PLACE**.
THE **GREAT CONQUEST** SHALL GO ON!
END.

THE ANACHRONAUTS
DAN PANOSIAN 19 92

WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK *DAN PANOSIAN* FOR DESIGNING *"THE ANACHRONAUTS"* FOR THIS SUMMER'S *"CITIZEN KANG"* STORYLINE. THANKS, *DAN!* AND TO ALL OF YOU-- *ENJOY!!!*

--RALF & PAT

CHRONOPOLIS



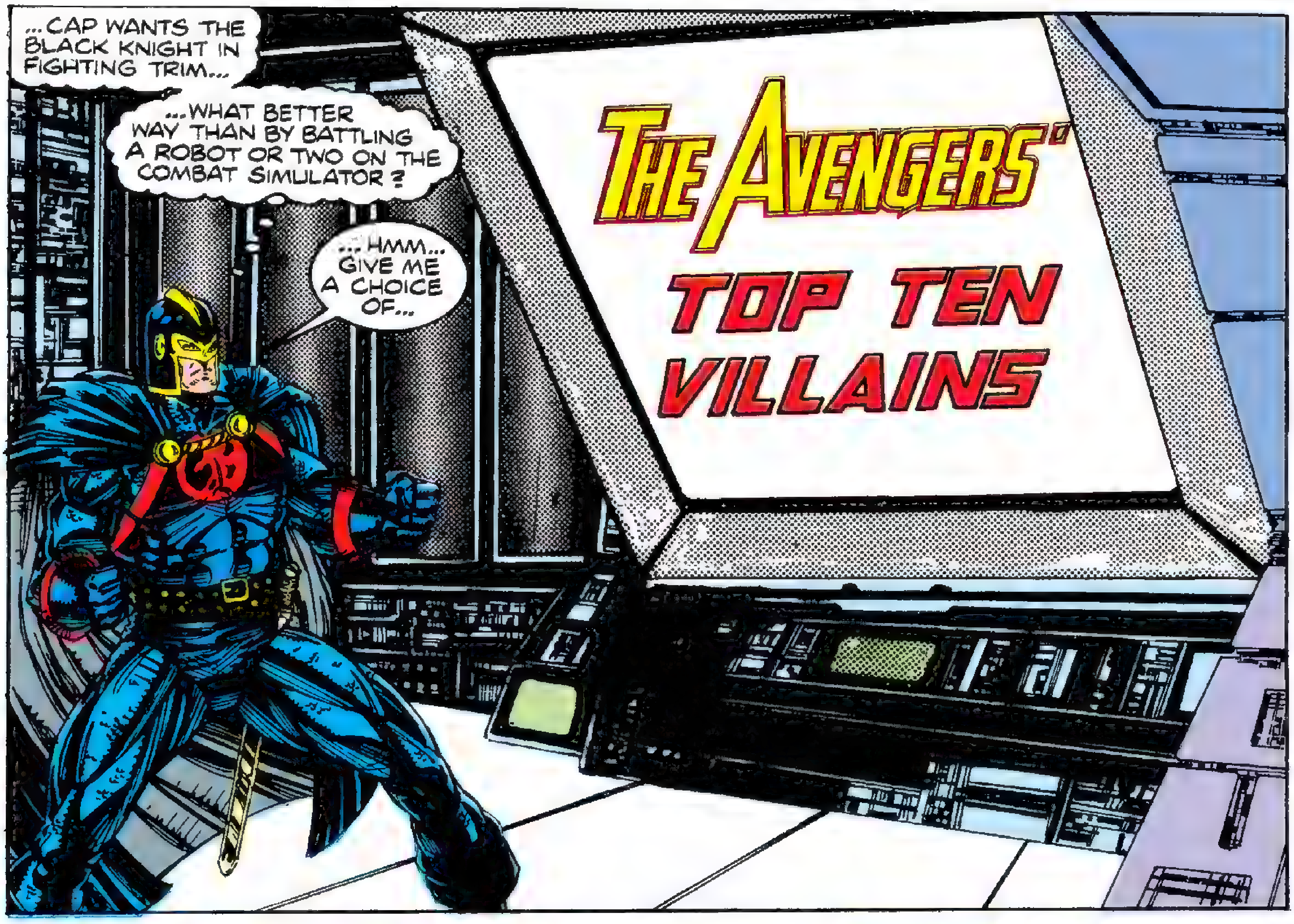
City-state headquarters of **Kang the First**, Conqueror of Time!

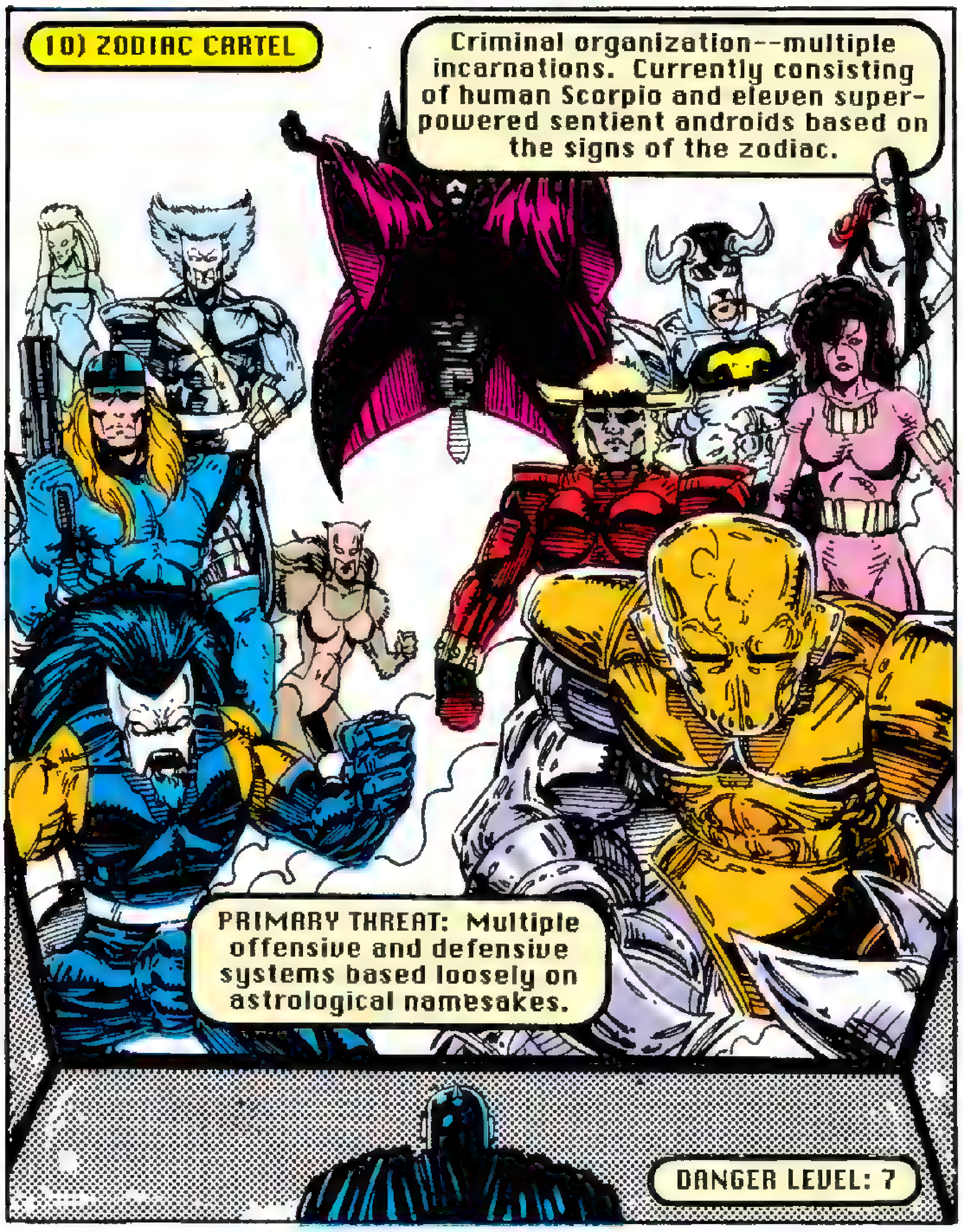
Located on the outskirts of timeless **Limbo** with access-points to all of the **time eras** Kang has conquered or is in the process thereof, Chronopolis is Kang's lifelong **masterwork**!

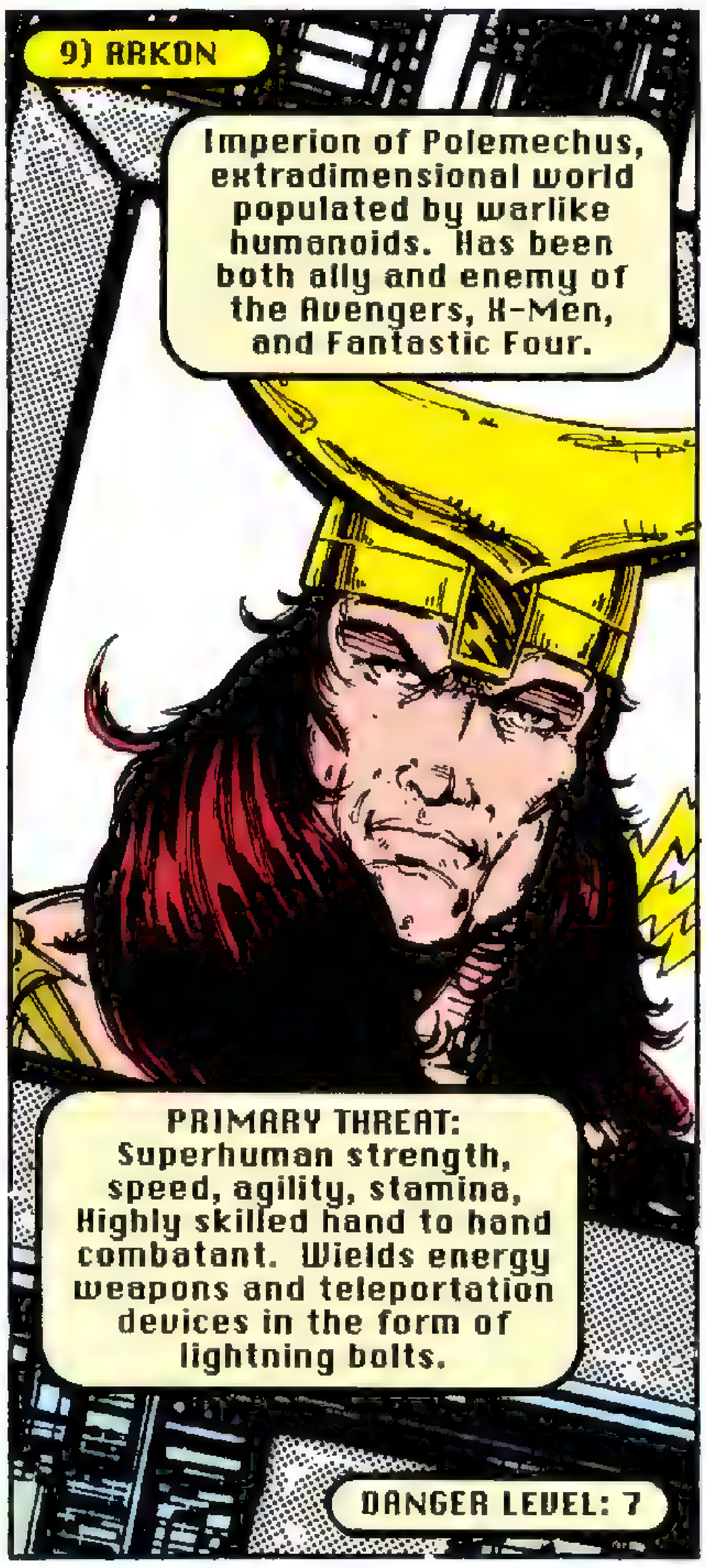
Each block goes on till the **ends of the Earth** itself in the time period that defines it. Unless you know where the **hidden portals** to the next block are located, you could wander about in one subsection of the city **forever**!

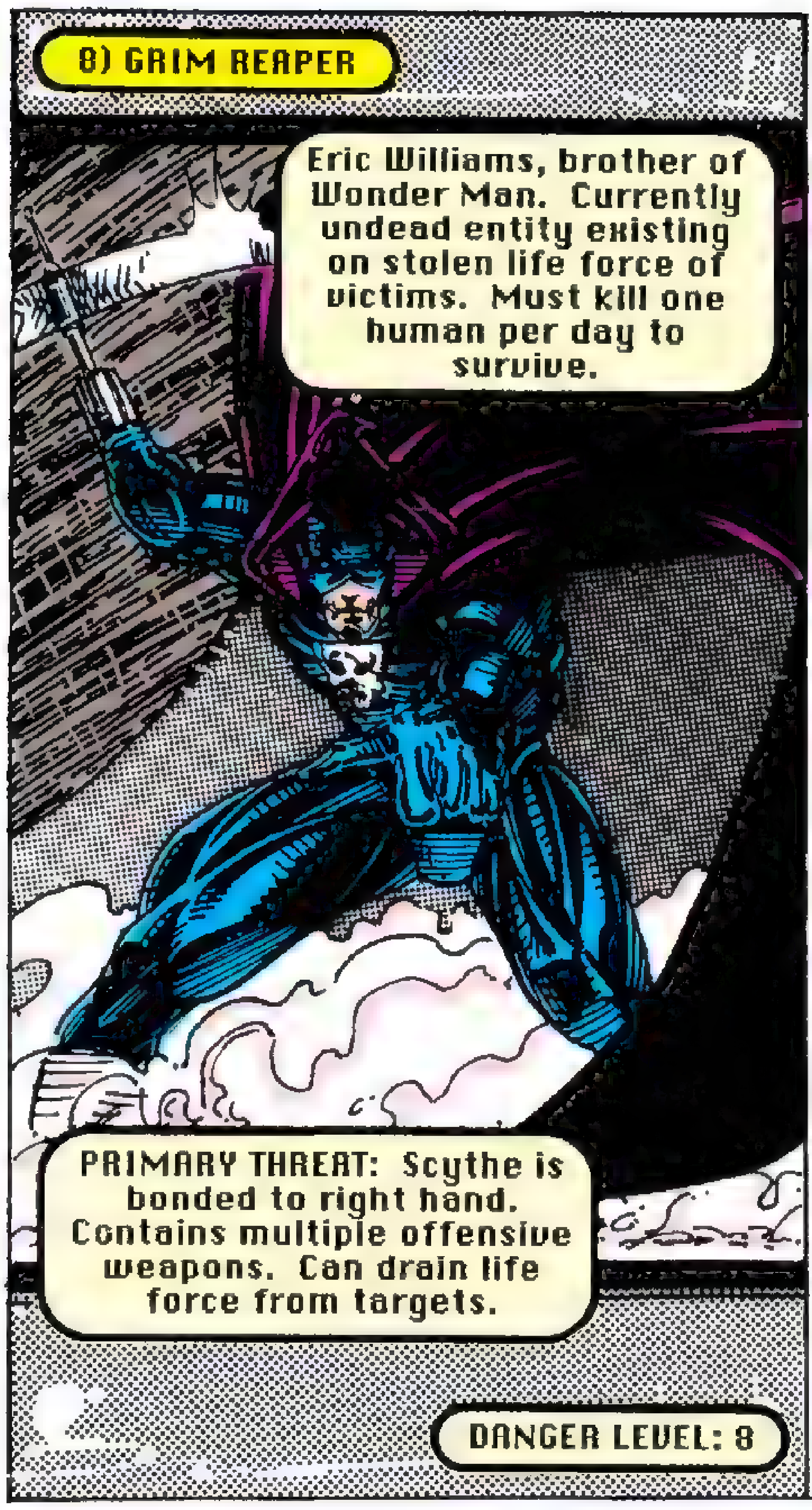
It is a city like no other — composed of **interlocking mosaics** of real estate with each city block existing in its own **time era**!

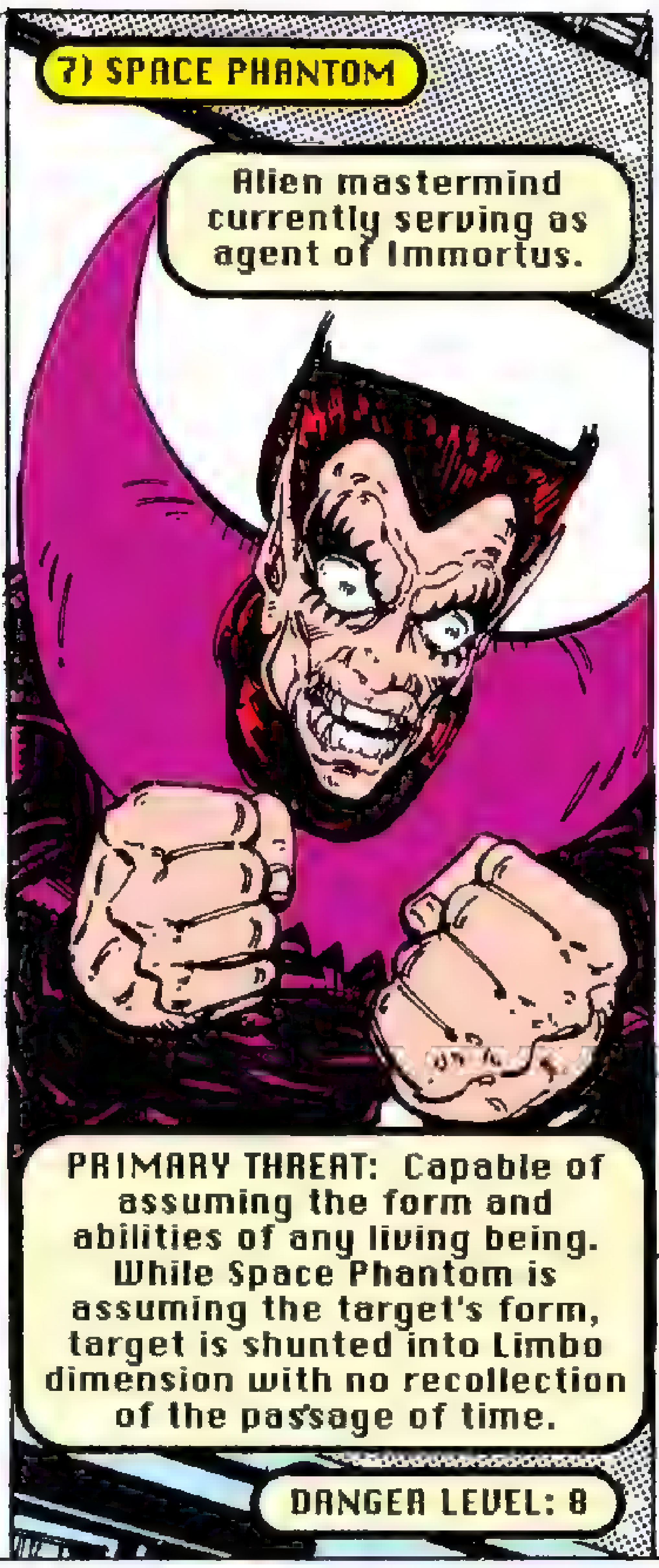
The more **primitive** time eras are in the **outskirts**, the most **futuristic** time era is at the urban **center**. The central mega-structure is **Kang's citadel**, the hub of Kang's ten millennium empire!

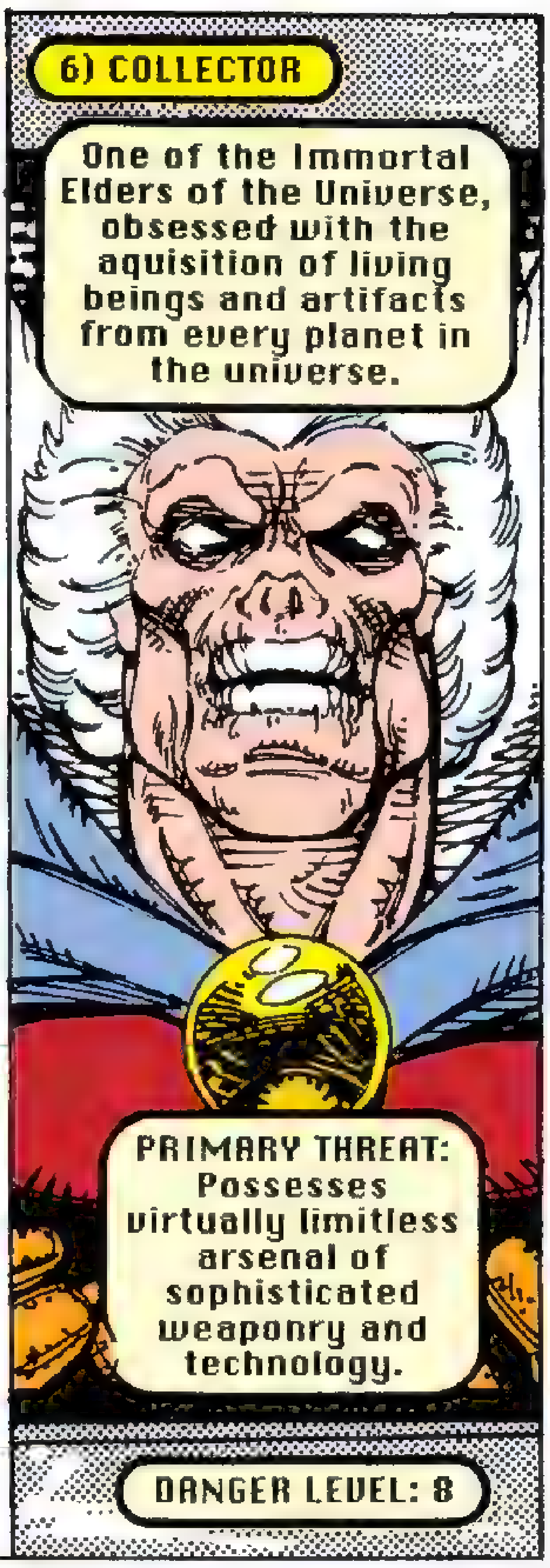

...CAP WANTS THE BLACK KNIGHT IN FIGHTING TRIM...
...WHAT BETTER WAY THAN BY BATTLING A ROBOT OR TWO ON THE COMBAT SIMULATOR?
...HMM... GIVE ME A CHOICE OF...
THE AVENGERS' TOP TEN VILLAINS

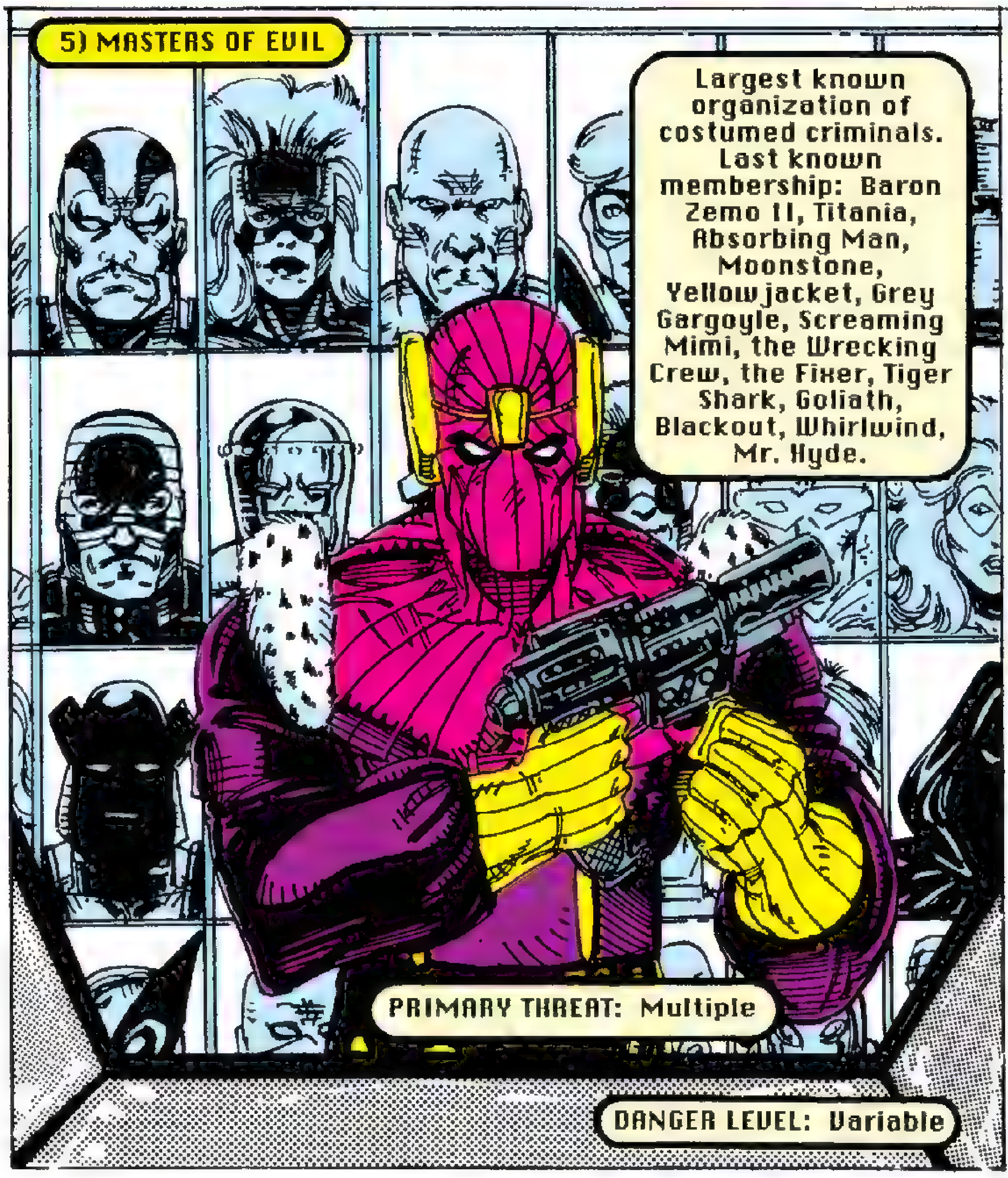

10) ZODIAC CARTEL
Criminal organization--multiple incarnations. Currently consisting of human Scorpio and eleven super-powered sentient androids based on the signs of the zodiac.
PRIMARY THREAT: Multiple offensive and defensive systems based loosely on astrological namesakes.
DANGER LEVEL: 7

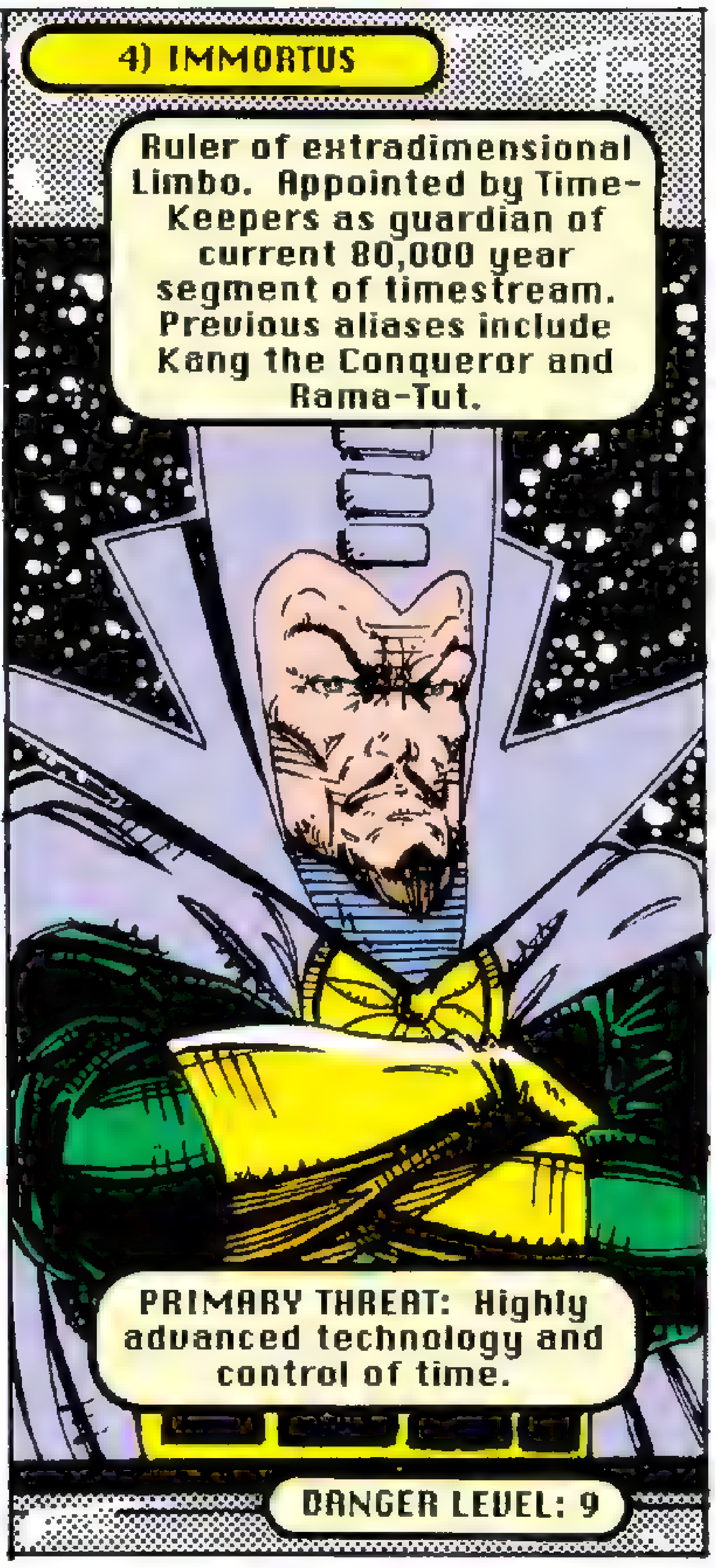

9) ARKON
Imperion of Polemechus, extradimensional world populated by warlike humanoids. Has been both ally and enemy of the Avengers, X-Men, and Fantastic Four.
PRIMARY THREAT: Superhuman strength, speed, agility, stamina. Highly skilled hand to hand combatant. Wields energy weapons and teleportation devices in the form of lightning bolts.
DANGER LEVEL: 7

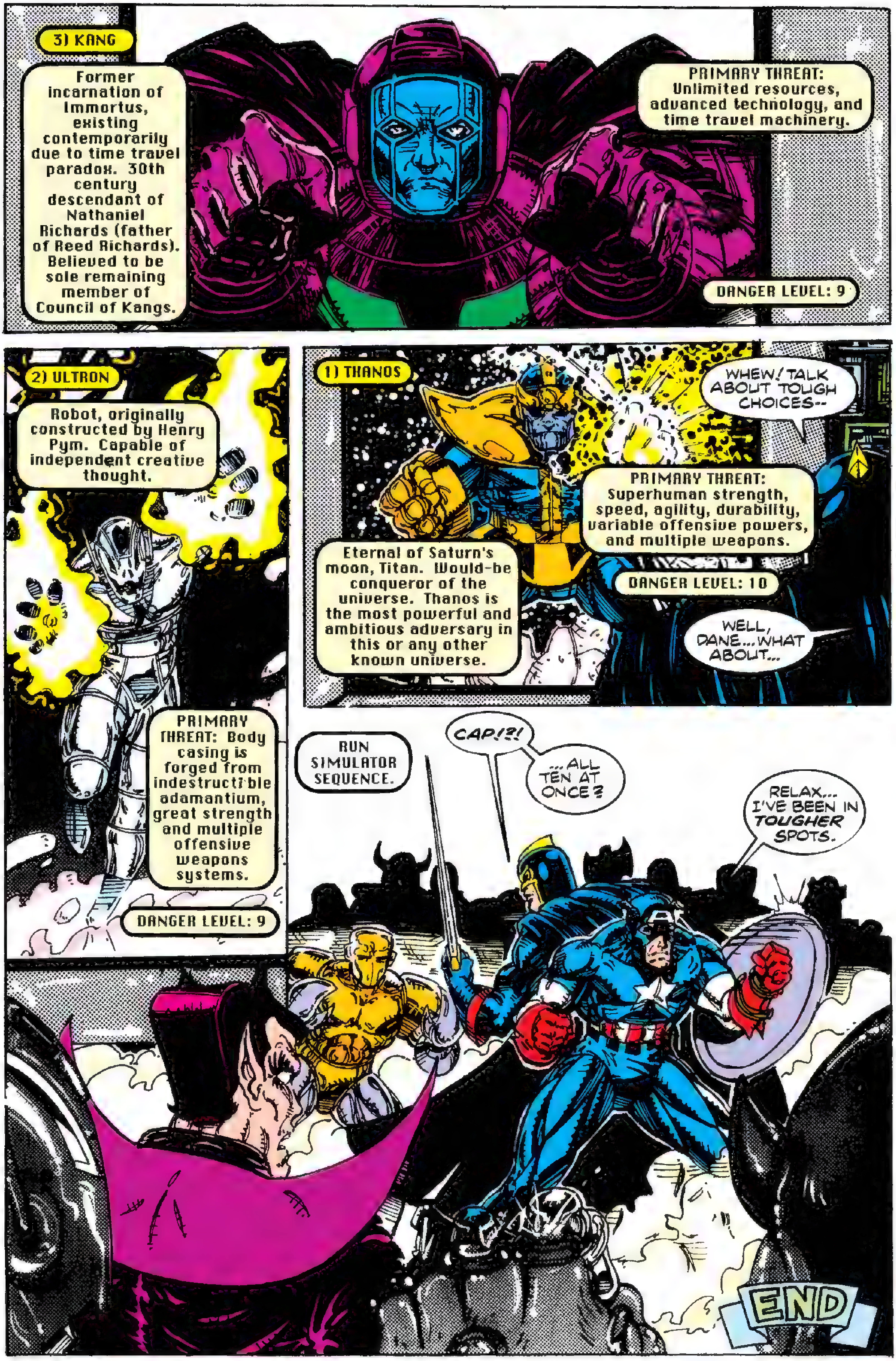

8) GRIM REAPER
Eric Williams, brother of Wonder Man. Currently undead entity existing on stolen life force of victims. Must kill one human per day to survive.
PRIMARY THREAT: Scythe is bonded to right hand. Contains multiple offensive weapons. Can drain life force from targets.
DANGER LEVEL: 8


7) SPACE PHANTOM
Alien mastermind currently serving as agent of Immortus.
PRIMARY THREAT: Capable of assuming the form and abilities of any living being. While Space Phantom is assuming the target's form, target is shunted into Limbo dimension with no recollection of the passage of time.
DANGER LEVEL: 8


6) COLLECTOR
One of the Immortal Elders of the Universe, obsessed with the aquisition of living beings and artifacts from every planet in the universe.
PRIMARY THREAT: Possesses virtually limitless arsenal of sophisticated weaponry and technology.
DANGER LEVEL: 8


5) MASTERS OF EVIL
Largest known organization of costumed criminals. Last known membership: Baron Zemo II, Titania, Absorbing Man, Moonstone, Yellowjacket, Grey Gargoyle, Screaming Mimi, the Wrecking Crew, the Fixer, Tiger Shark, Goliath, Blackout, Whirlwind, Mr. Hyde.
PRIMARY THREAT: Multiple
DANGER LEVEL: Variable

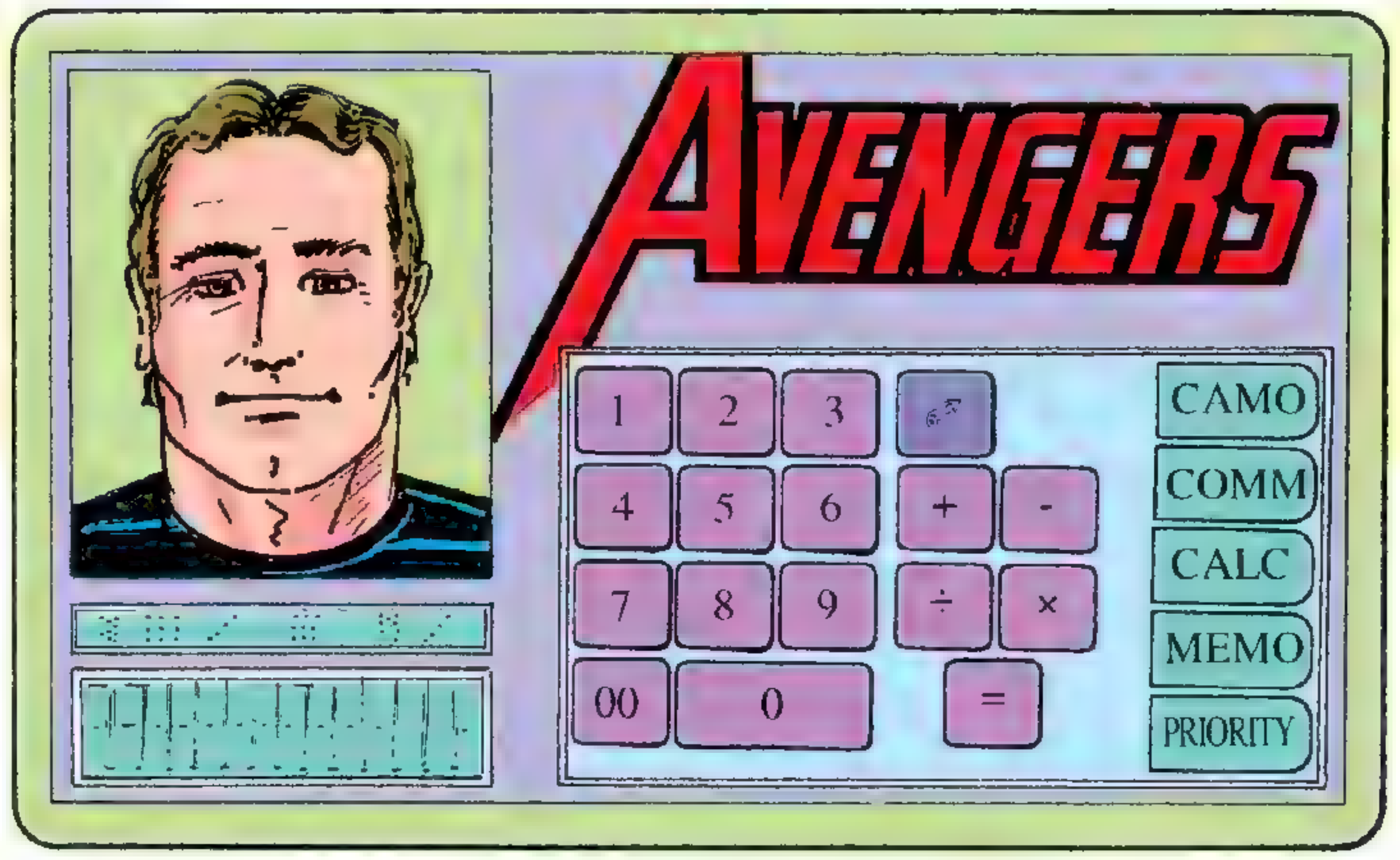

4) IMMORTUS
Ruler of extradimensional Limbo. Appointed by Time-Keepers as guardian of current 80,000 year segment of timestream. Previous aliases include Kang the Conqueror and Rama-Tut.
PRIMARY THREAT: Highly advanced technology and control of time.
DANGER LEVEL: 9


3) KANG
Former incarnation of Immortus, existing contemporarily due to time travel paradox. 30th century descendant of Nathaniel Richards (father of Reed Richards). Believed to be sole remaining member of Council of Kangs.
PRIMARY THREAT: Unlimited resources, advanced technology, and time travel machinery.
DANGER LEVEL: 9
2) ULTRON
Robot, originally constructed by Henry Pym. Capable of independent creative thought.
PRIMARY THREAT: Body casing is forged from indestructible adamantium, great strength and multiple offensive weapons systems.
DANGER LEVEL: 9
1) THANOS
WHEW! TALK ABOUT TOUGH CHOICES--
PRIMARY THREAT: Superhuman strength, speed, agility, durability, variable offensive powers, and multiple weapons.
Eternal of Saturn's moon, Titan. Would-be conqueror of the universe. Thanos is the most powerful and ambitious adversary in this or any other known universe.
DANGER LEVEL: 10
WELL, DANE...WHAT ABOUT...
RUN SIMULATOR SEQUENCE.
CAP!?!
...ALL TEN AT ONCE?
RELAX... I'VE BEEN IN *TOUGHER* SPOTS.
END

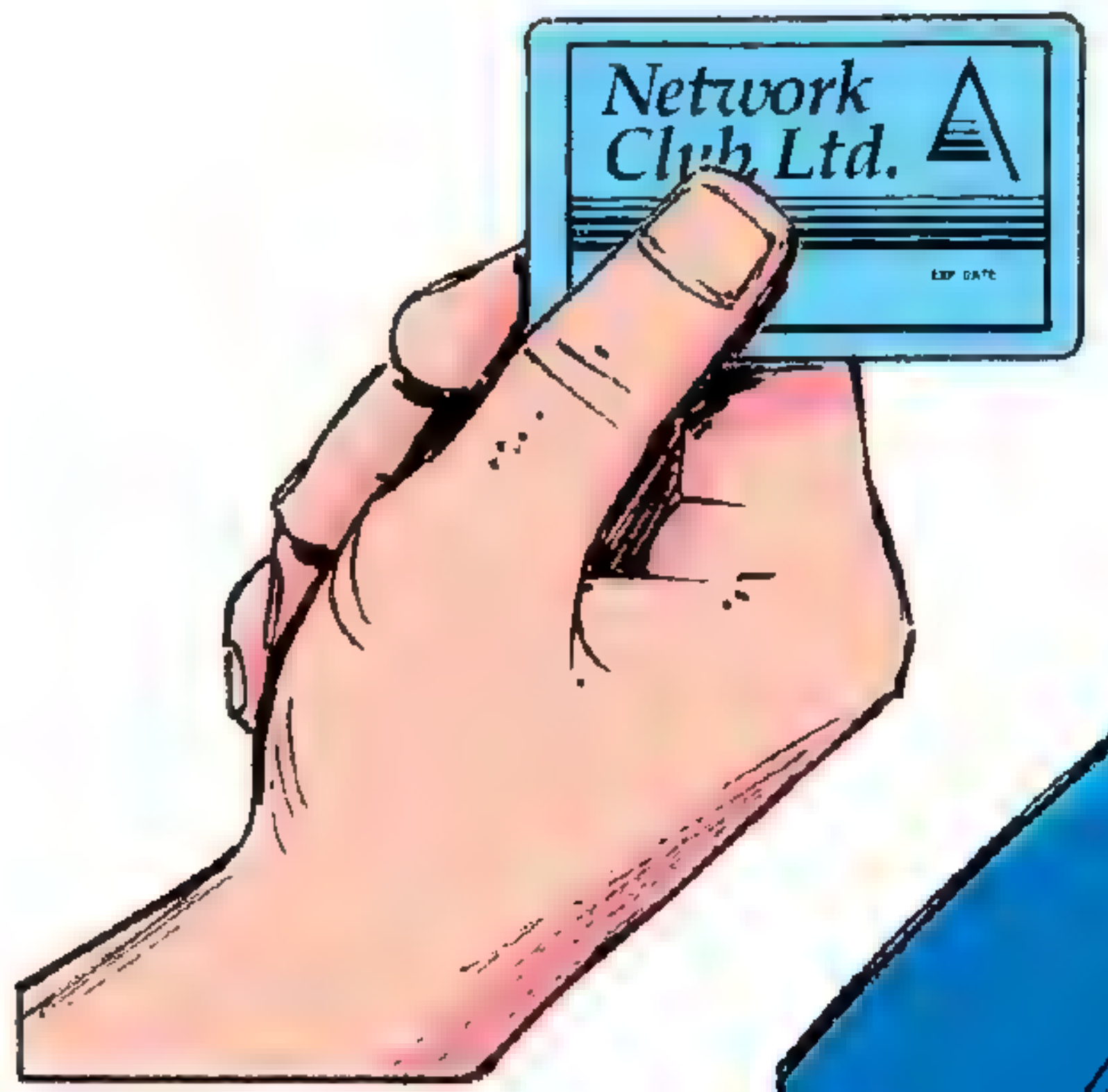
SECRETS OF THE AVENGERS

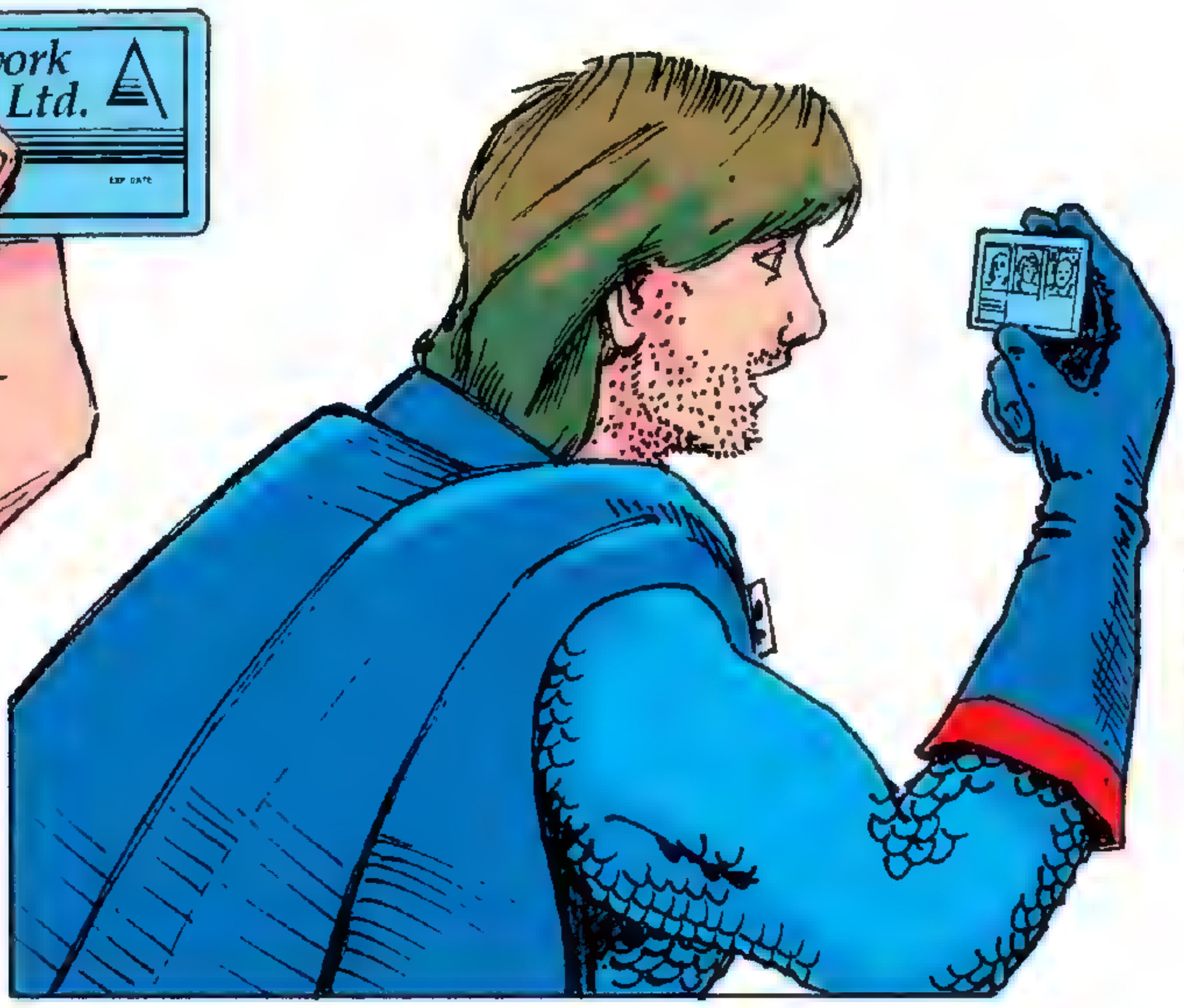
COMMUNICARD

Issued to all Avengers, East Coast and West Coast, active members as well as reserve, plus non-costumed staff members, the Avengers Communicard is an amazing piece of technology designed by Tony Stark and Henry Pym and manufactured by Stark Enterprises . . .



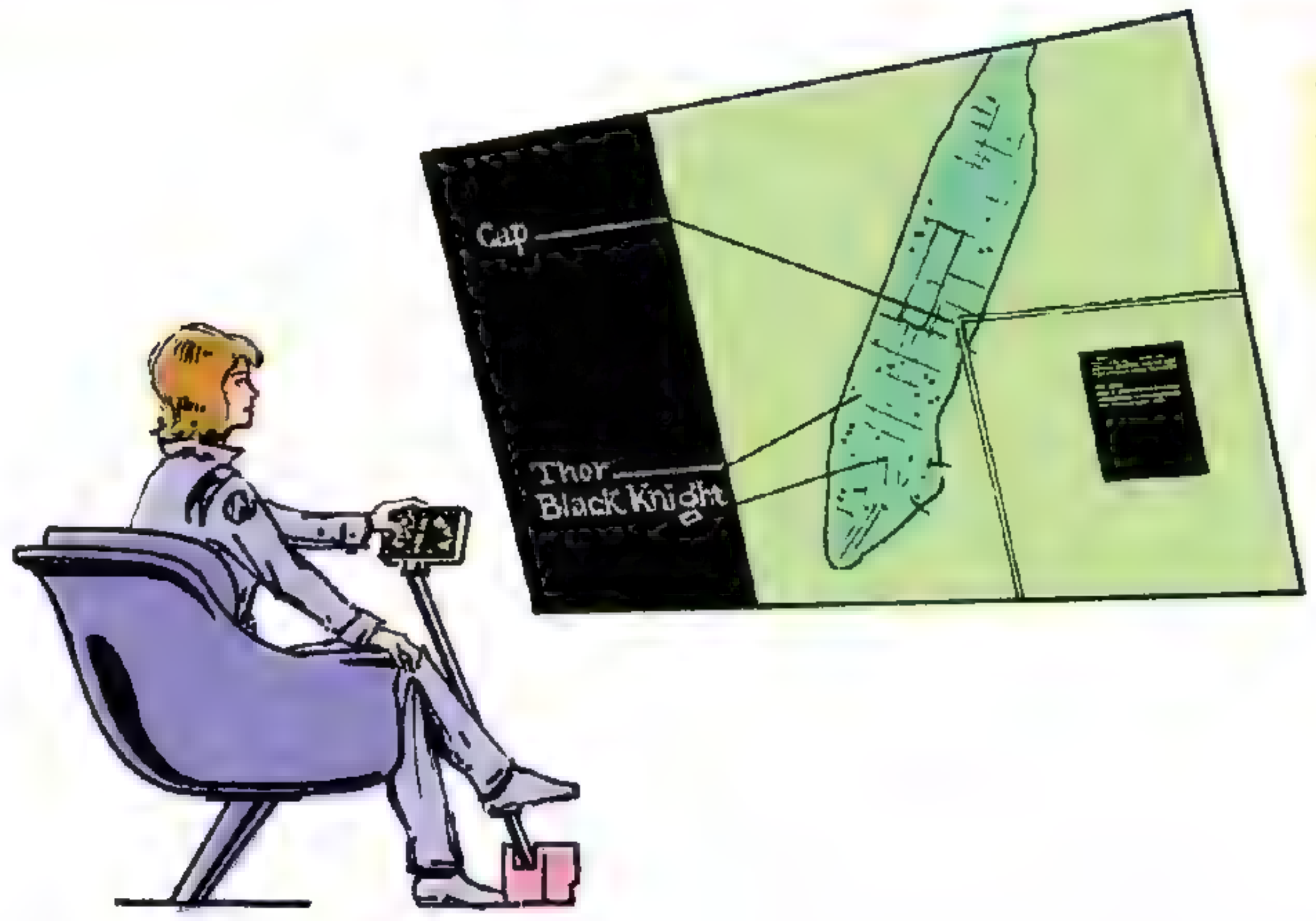
A mere 3⅜ inches wide by 2⅛ inches tall by 1/16 thick the size of a standard credit card powered by advanced thermal-instability batteries, the communicard is a marvelous, multi-functional item that fits easily inside both wallets and hidden pockets . . .


Network Club Ltd.



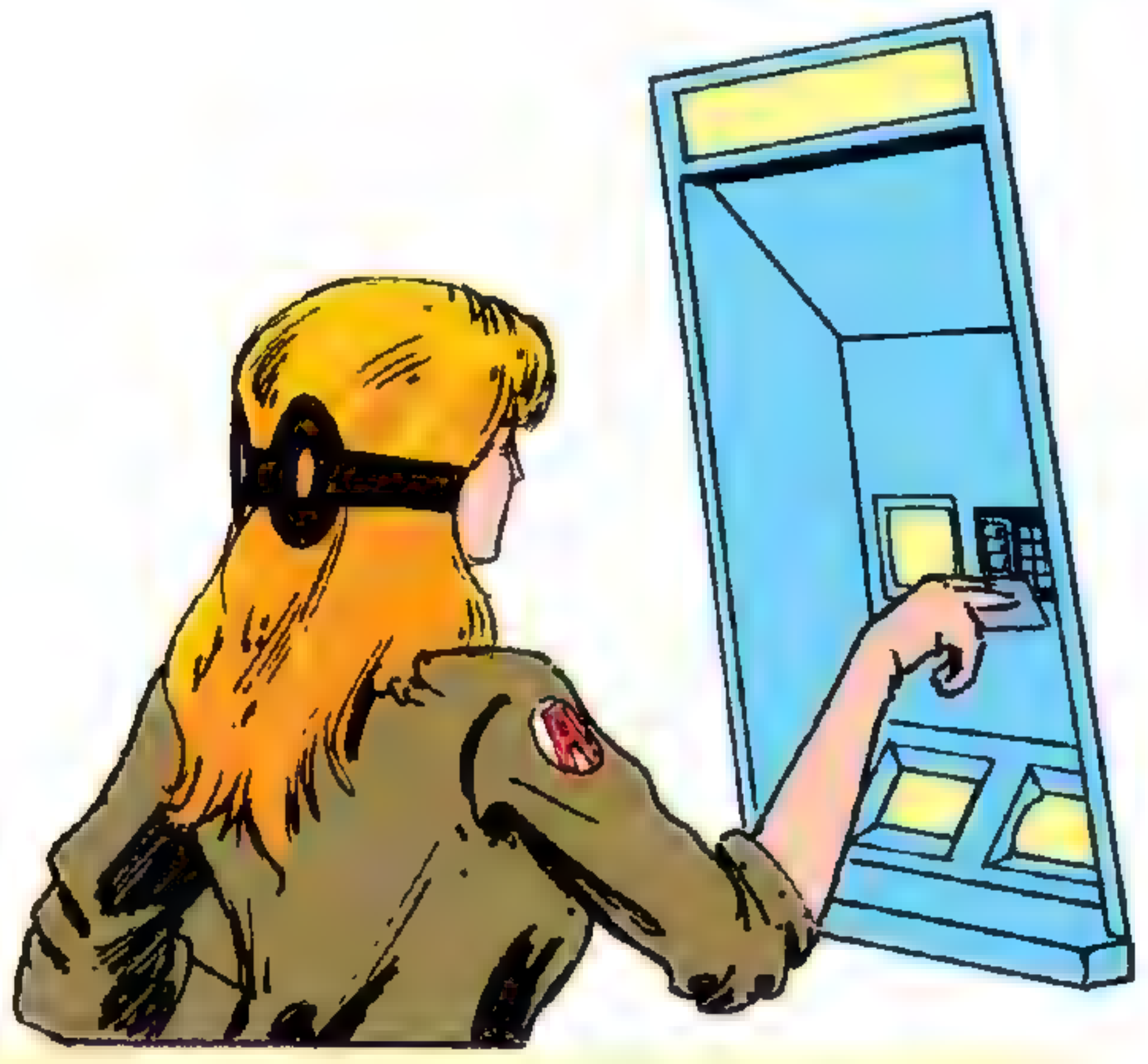
The front side of the card is a two-way audio-video transmitter and receiver. Using the variable-configured numbered grid, the card holder can call the switchboard at Avengers headquarters or "dial" any card-carrying member directly...

Signature-encrypted so that it can only be operated by the person it was issued to, the Communicard's all-surface display can camouflage itself as an ordinary credit card at the touch of a button.

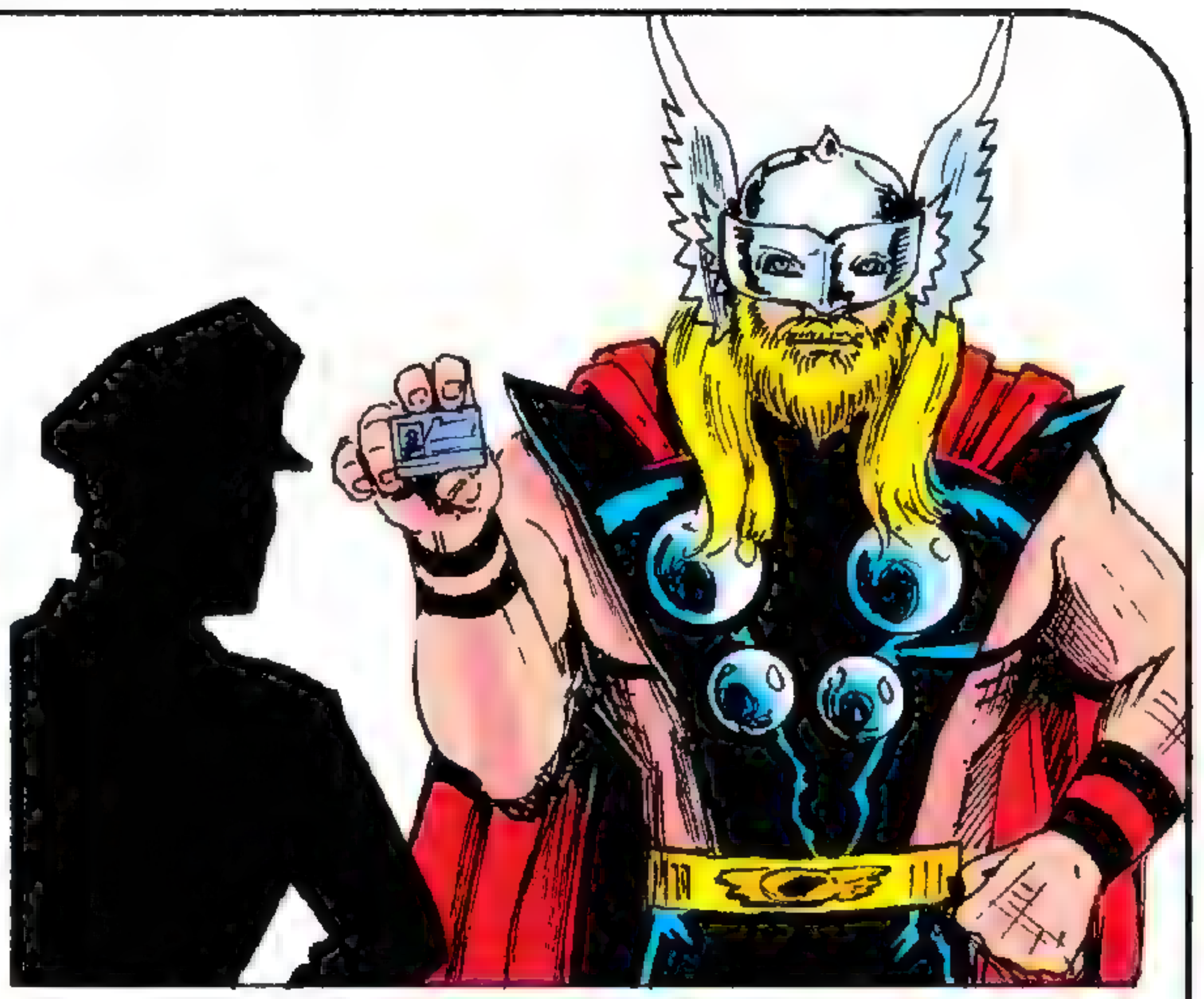


The Communicard's signal is strong enough to carry approximately 2000 miles, and it serves as a homing beacon so headquarters can know where its members are at all times.

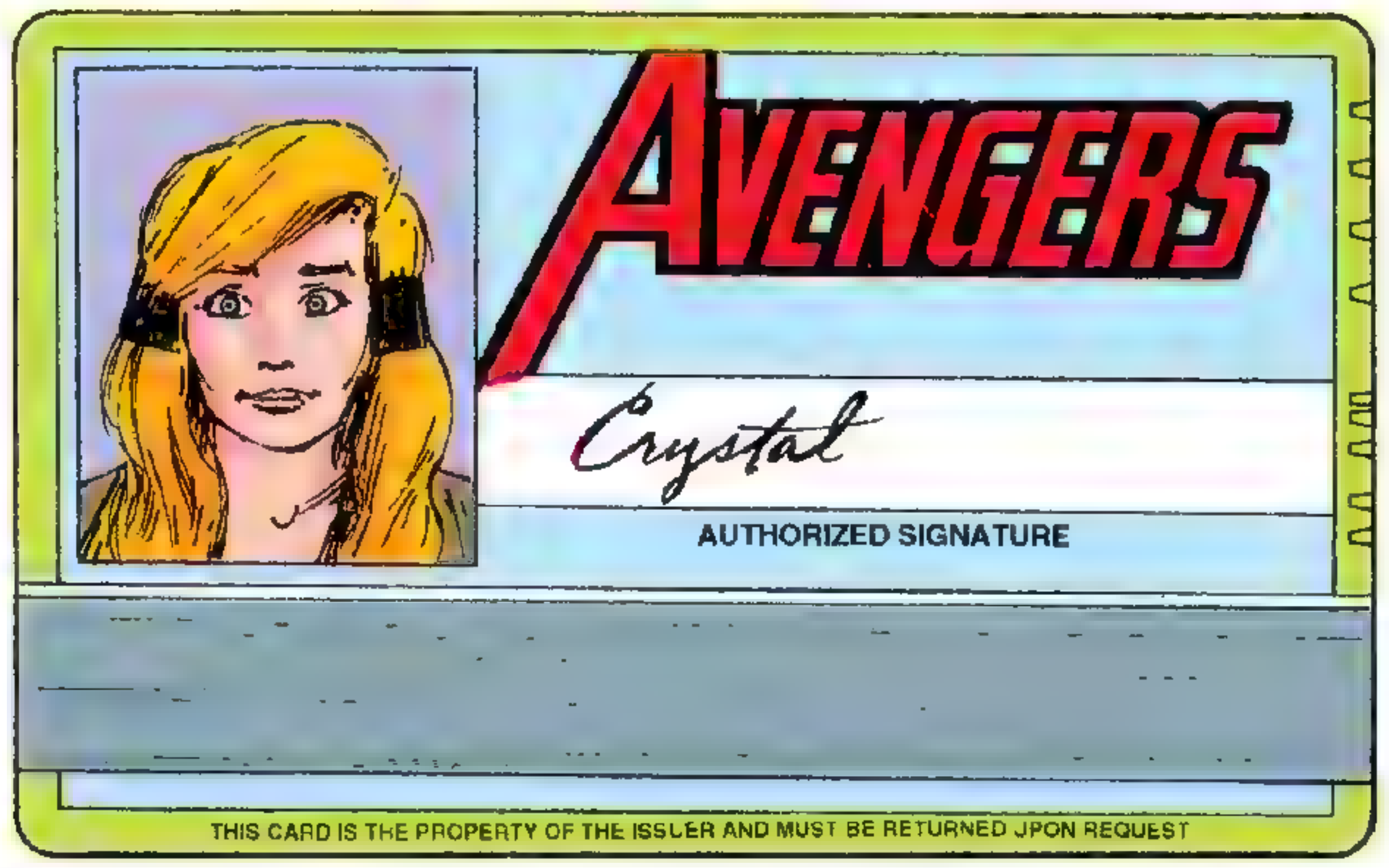
The variable number grid can also be used as an entry keyboard for a sophisticated calculator.

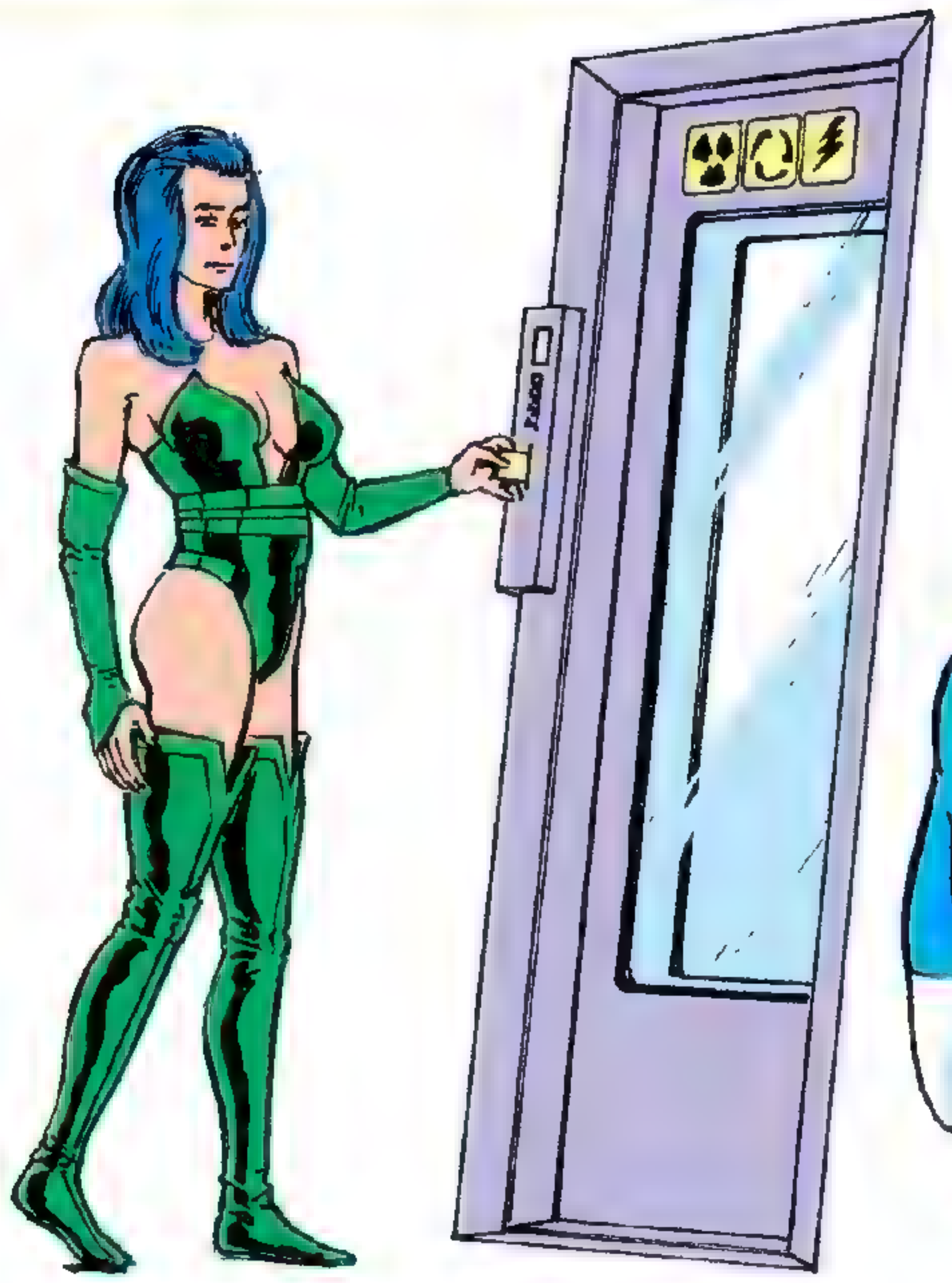


The magnetic strip on the back of the card will work in virtually every banking machine in the free world, allowing members to make withdrawals of up to $2500 against the Avengers account. Many places of business will even accept it as a credit card.



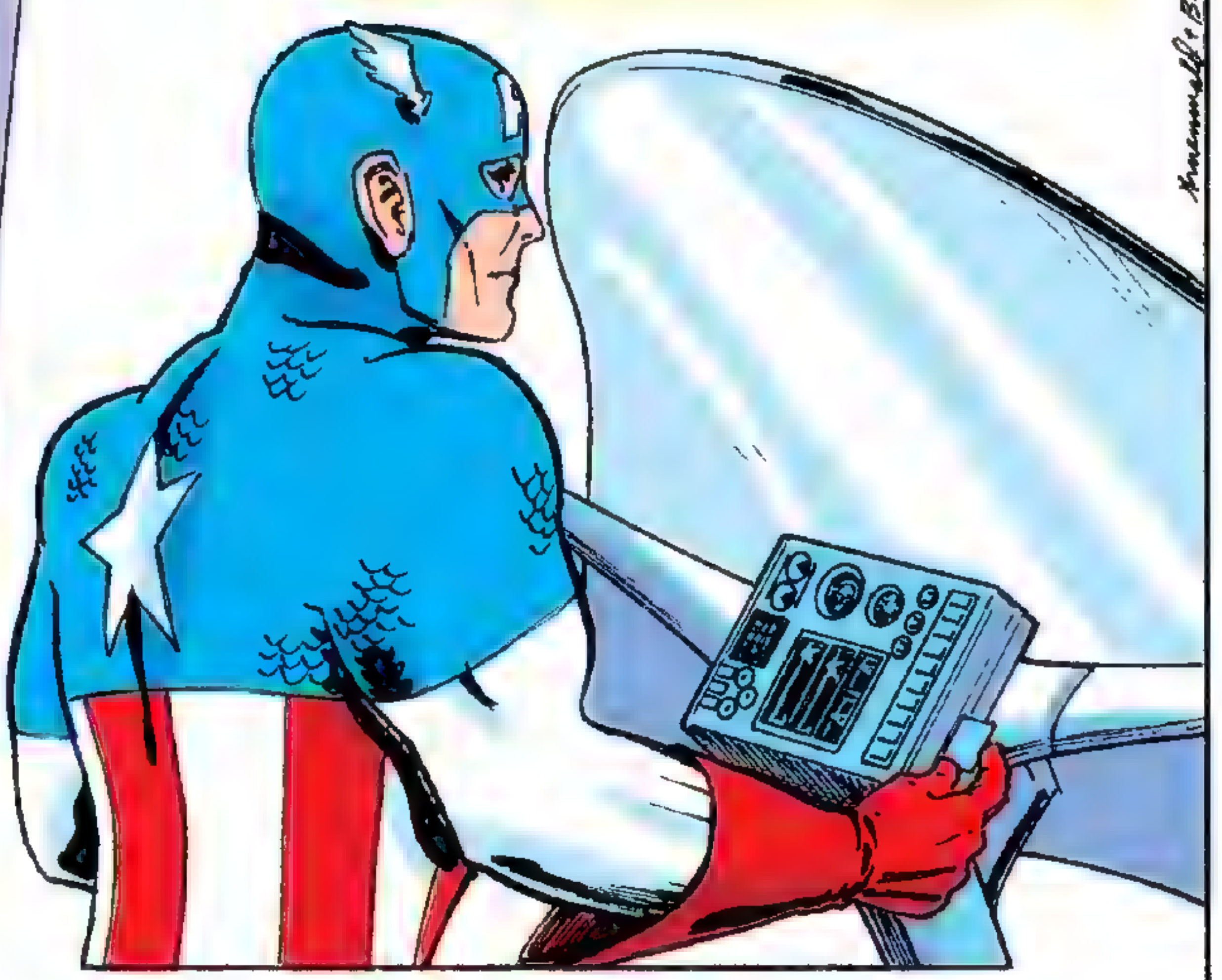
The other side of the card serves as definitive identification for each member. Law enforcement and military authorities throughout the world have been briefed that only the official cardholder can operate the card. Thus a simple call to headquarters provides a doublecheck on the identity of the caller.


AVENGERS
Crystal
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE
THIS CARD IS THE PROPERTY OF THE ISSUER AND MUST BE RETURNED UPON REQUEST

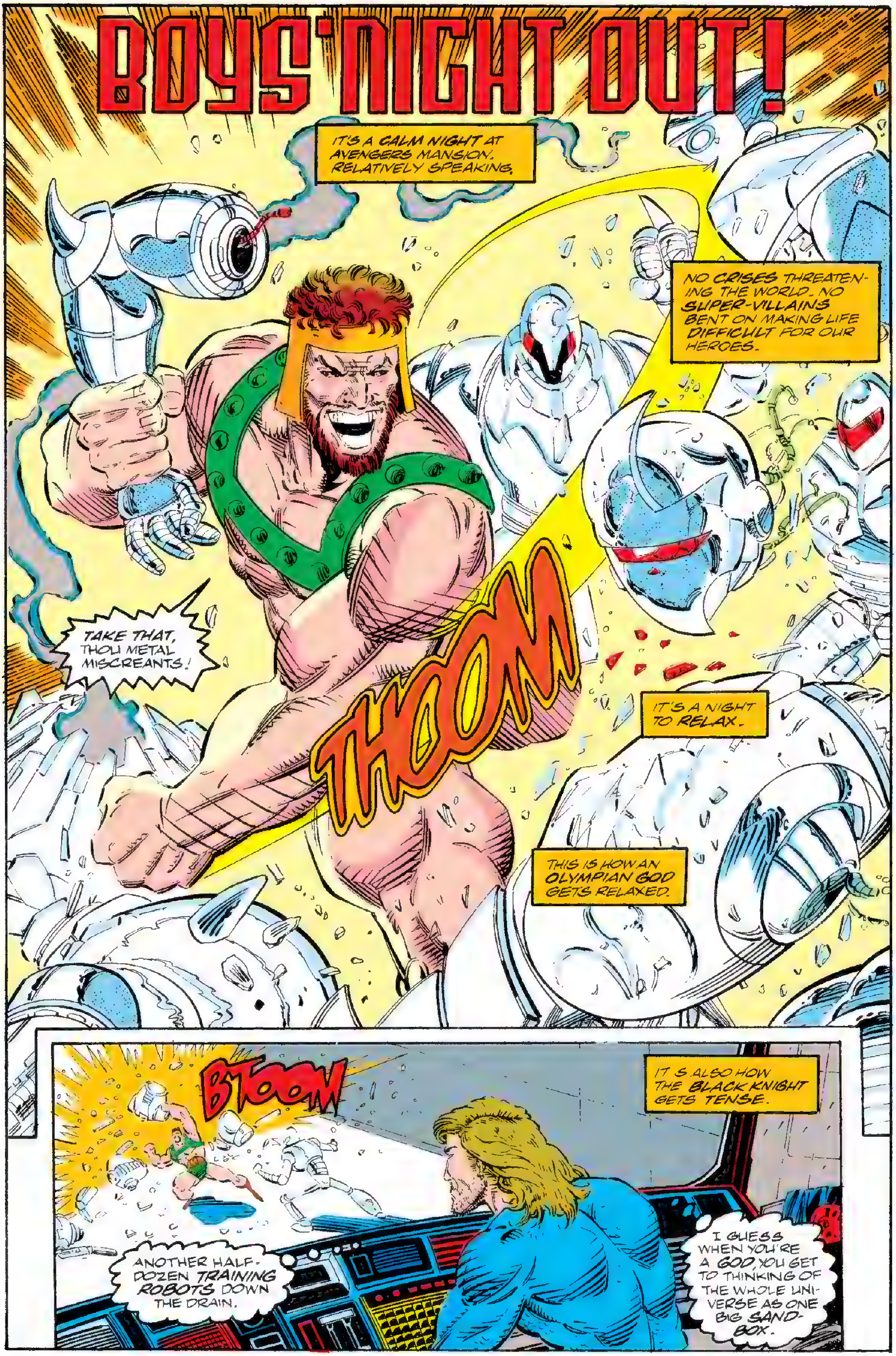


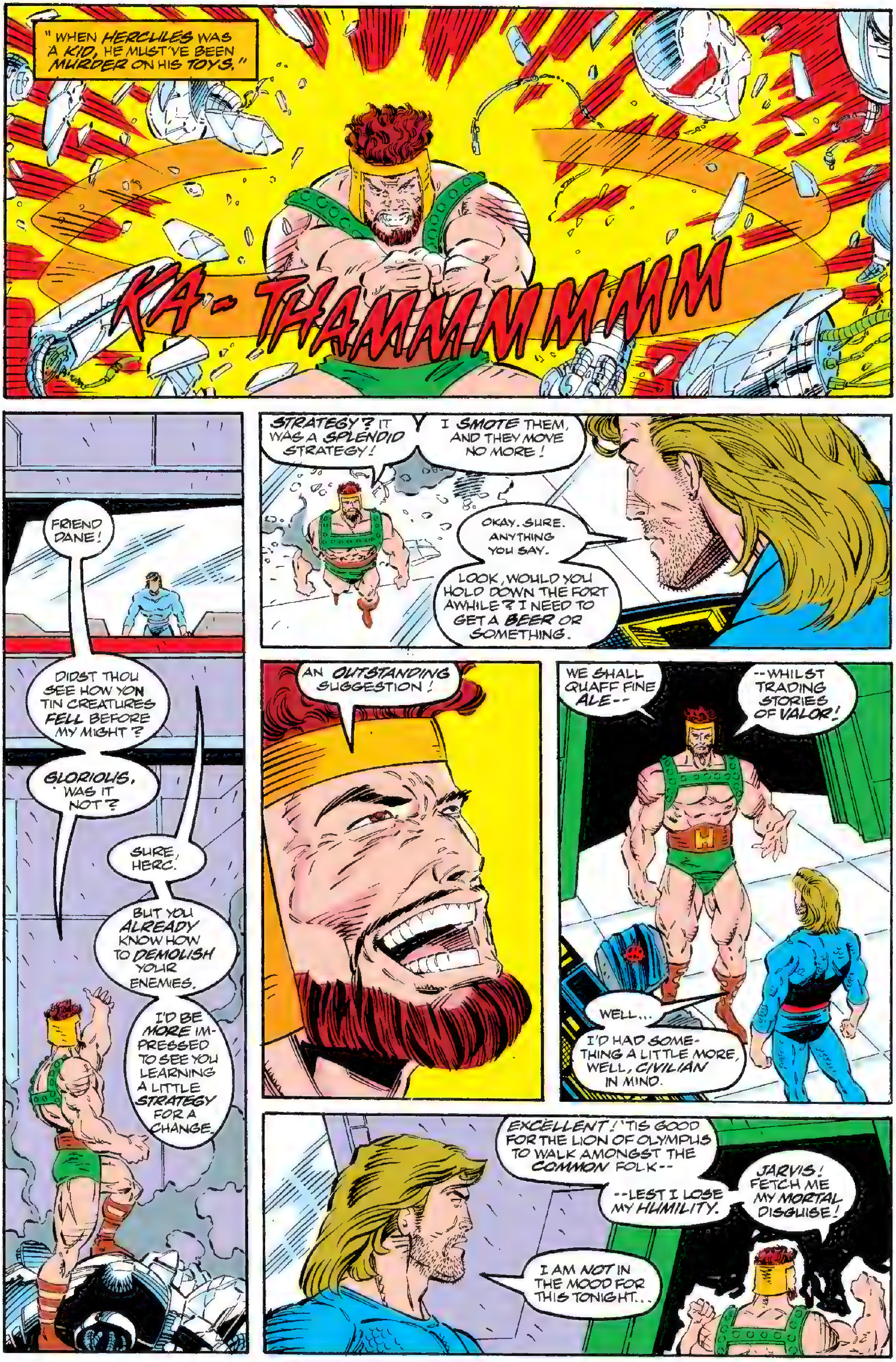
Wielded by its rightful holder, the communicard is the key that opens the door to Avengers headquarters and its various facilities. Some facilities are only accessible by cards issued to the active membership, however. And only the Avengers chairmans' cards have access everywhere.

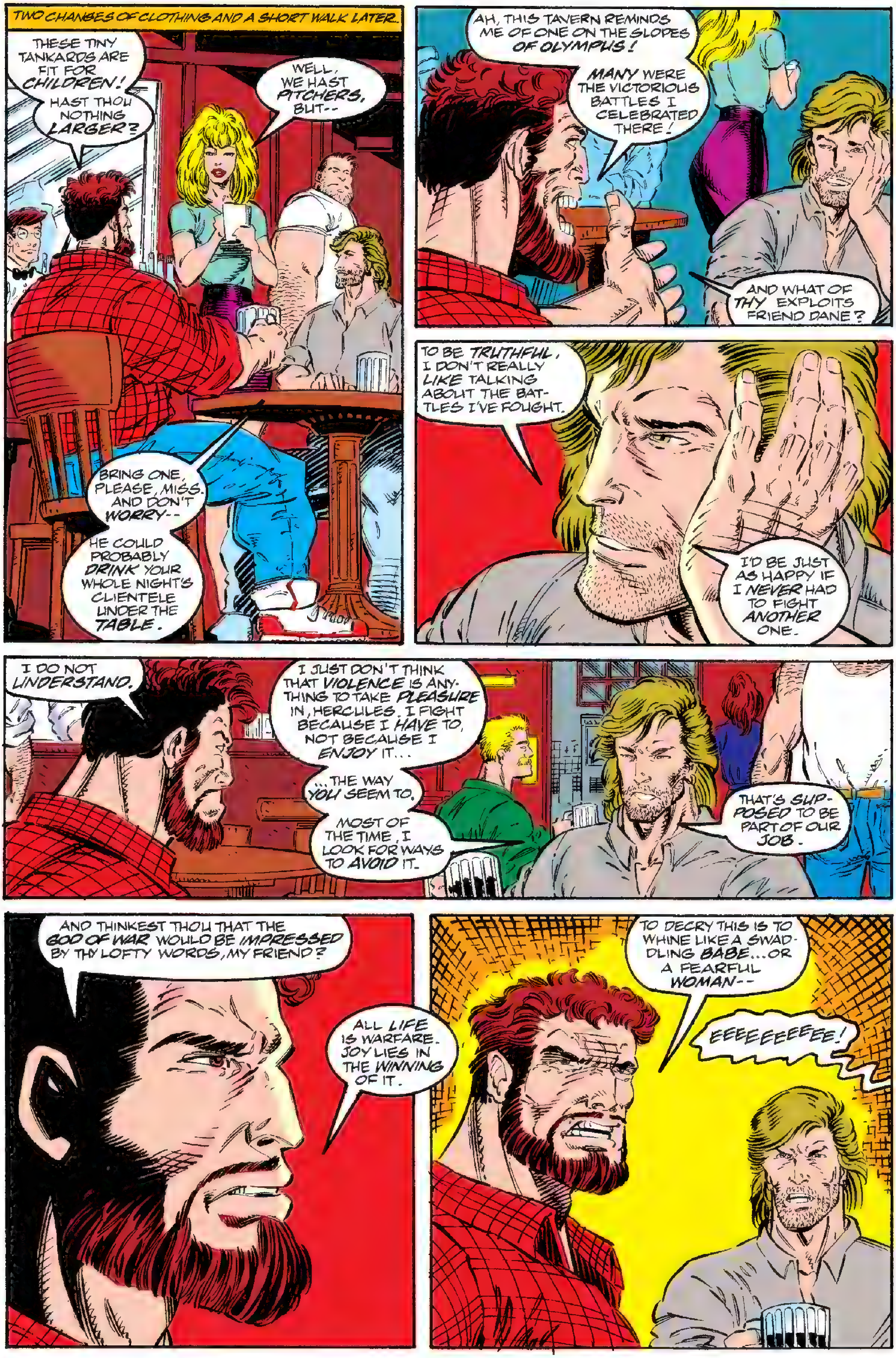
In the hands of its rightful holder, the communicard also serves as the ignition key for the long-range quinjets and short-range sky-cycles . . .

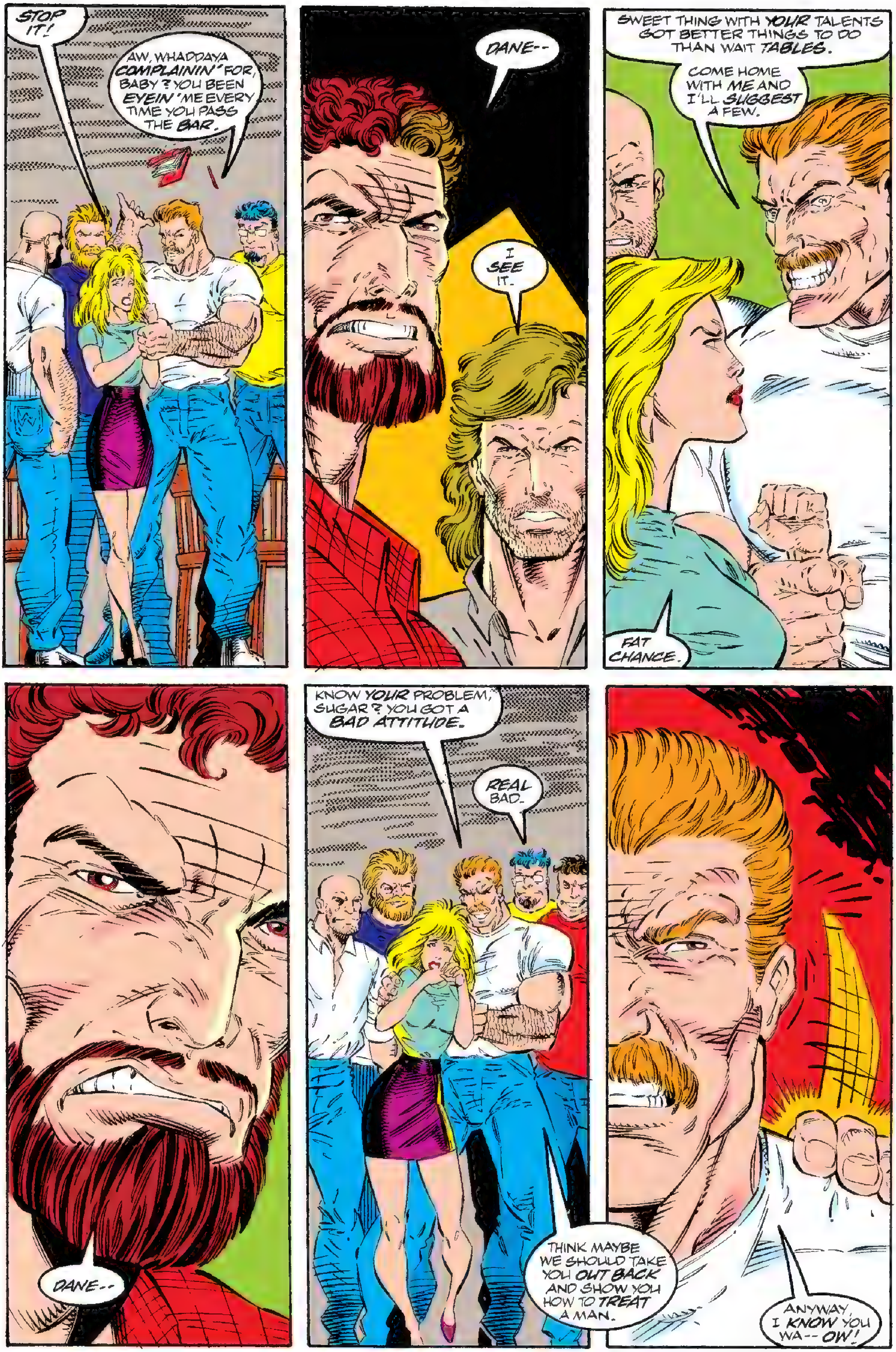


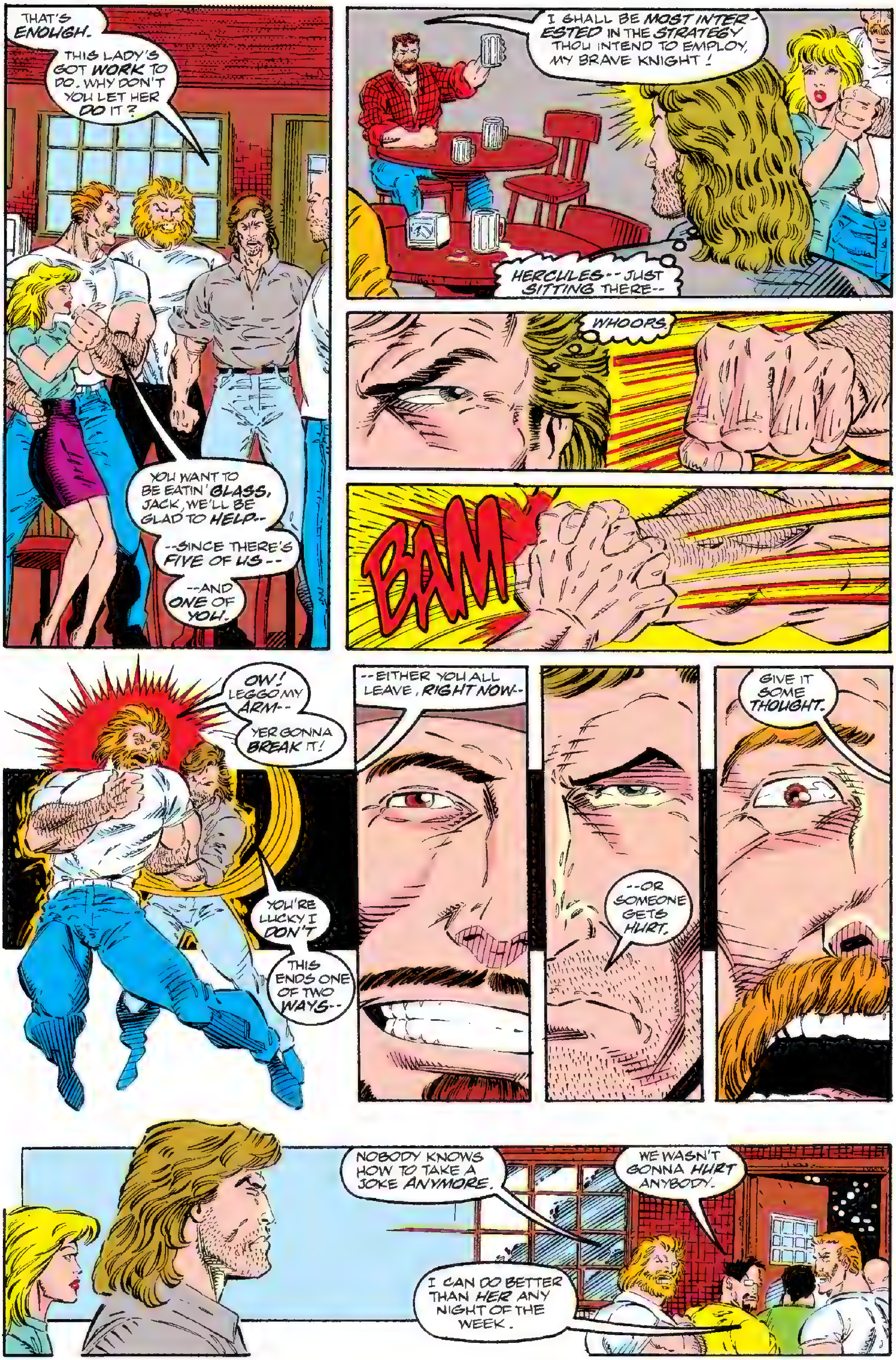
Truly it can be said that the Avengers communicard is the single most important piece of technology an Avenger can carry. That is why no Avenger goes anywhere without it!

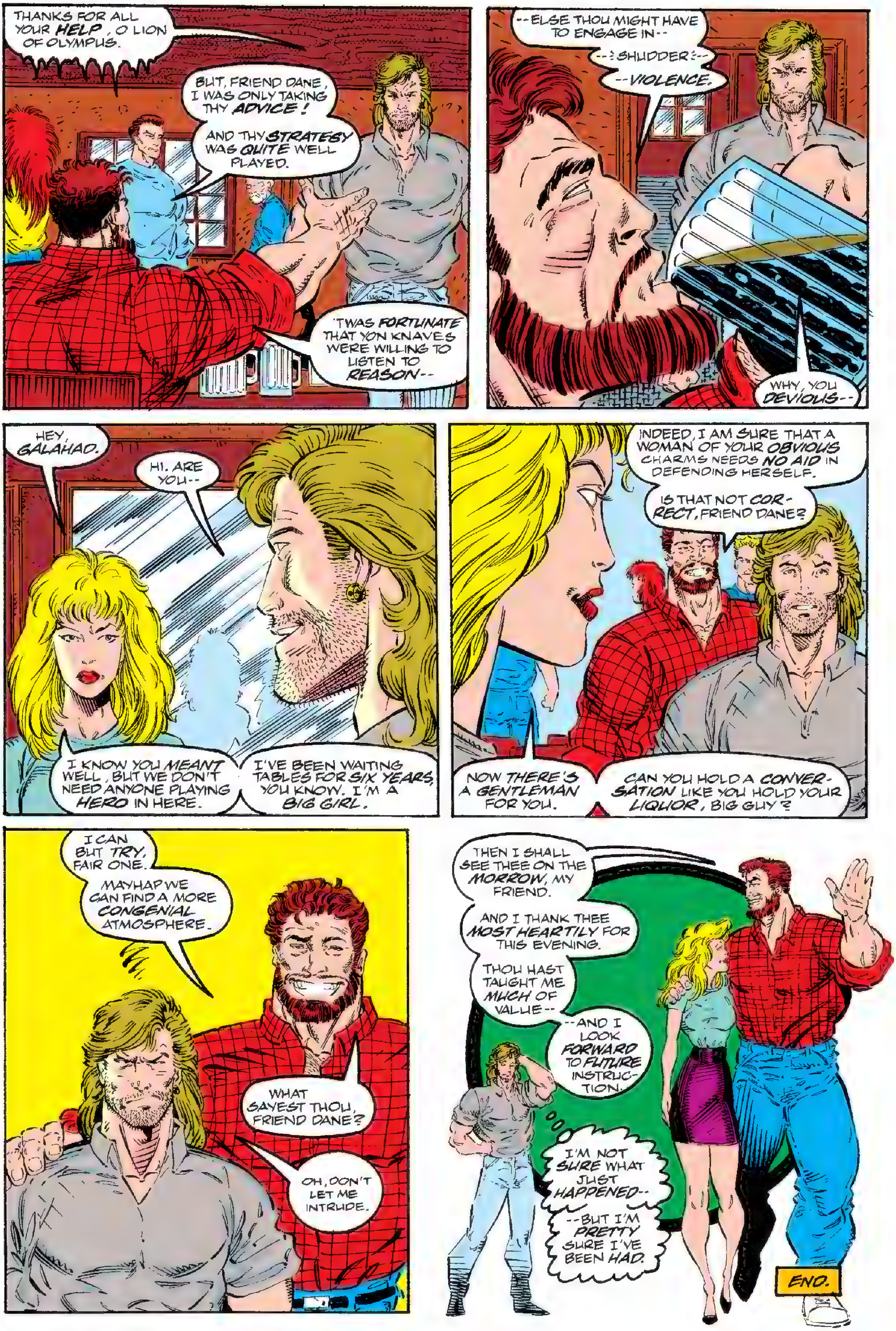

BOYS' NIGHT OUT!
IT'S A CALM NIGHT AT AVENGERS MANSION. RELATIVELY SPEAKING.
NO CRISES THREATENING THE WORLD. NO SUPER-VILLAINS BENT ON MAKING LIFE DIFFICULT FOR OUR HEROES.
TAKE THAT, THOU METAL MISCREANTS!
THOOM
IT'S A NIGHT TO RELAX.
THIS IS HOW AN OLYMPIAN GOD GETS RELAXED.
BTOOM
IT'S ALSO HOW THE BLACK KNIGHT GETS TENSE.
ANOTHER HALF-DOZEN TRAINING ROBOTS DOWN THE DRAIN.
I GUESS WHEN YOU'RE A GOD, YOU GET TO THINKING OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE AS ONE BIG SANDBOX.

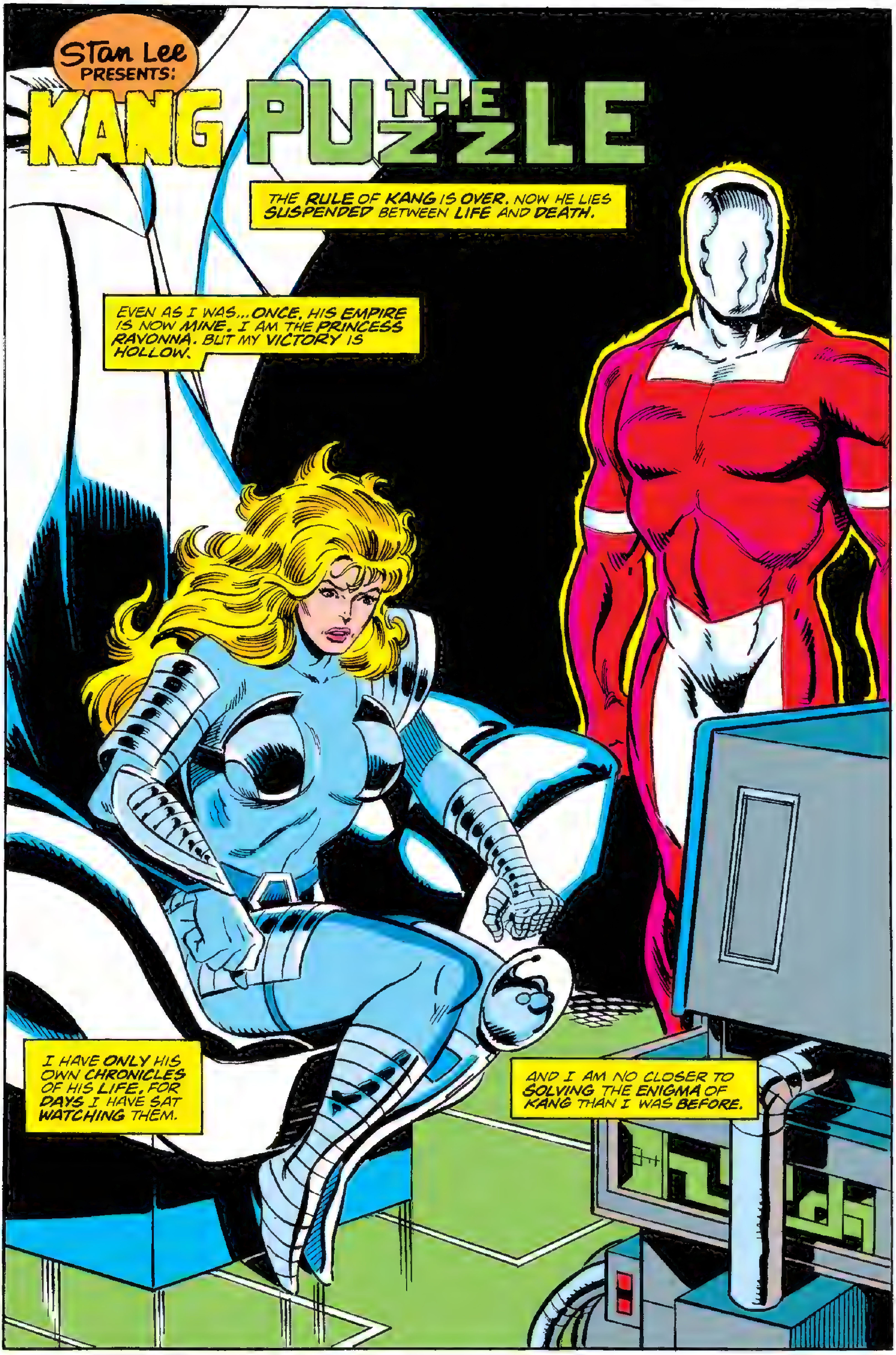

"WHEN HERCULES WAS A KID, HE MUST'VE BEEN MURDER ON HIS TOYS."
KA-THAMMMMMM
FRIEND DANE!
DIDST THOU SEE HOW YON TIN CREATURES FELL BEFORE MY MIGHT?
GLORIOUS, WAS IT NOT?
SURE, HERC.
BUT YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW TO DEMOLISH YOUR ENEMIES.
I'D BE MORE IMPRESSED TO SEE YOU LEARNING A LITTLE STRATEGY FOR A CHANGE.
STRATEGY? IT WAS A SPLENDID STRATEGY!
I SMOTE THEM, AND THEY MOVE NO MORE!
OKAY. SURE. ANYTHING YOU SAY.
LOOK, WOULD YOU HOLD DOWN THE FORT AWHILE? I NEED TO GET A BEER OR SOMETHING.
AN OUTSTANDING SUGGESTION!
WE SHALL QUAFF FINE ALE--
--WHILST TRADING STORIES OF VALOR!
WELL...
I'D HAD SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE, WELL, CIVILIAN IN MIND.
EXCELLENT! 'TIS GOOD FOR THE LION OF OLYMPUS TO WALK AMONGST THE COMMON FOLK--
--LEST I LOSE MY HUMILITY.
JARVIS! FETCH ME MY MORTAL DISGUISE!
I AM NOT IN THE MOOD FOR THIS TONIGHT...

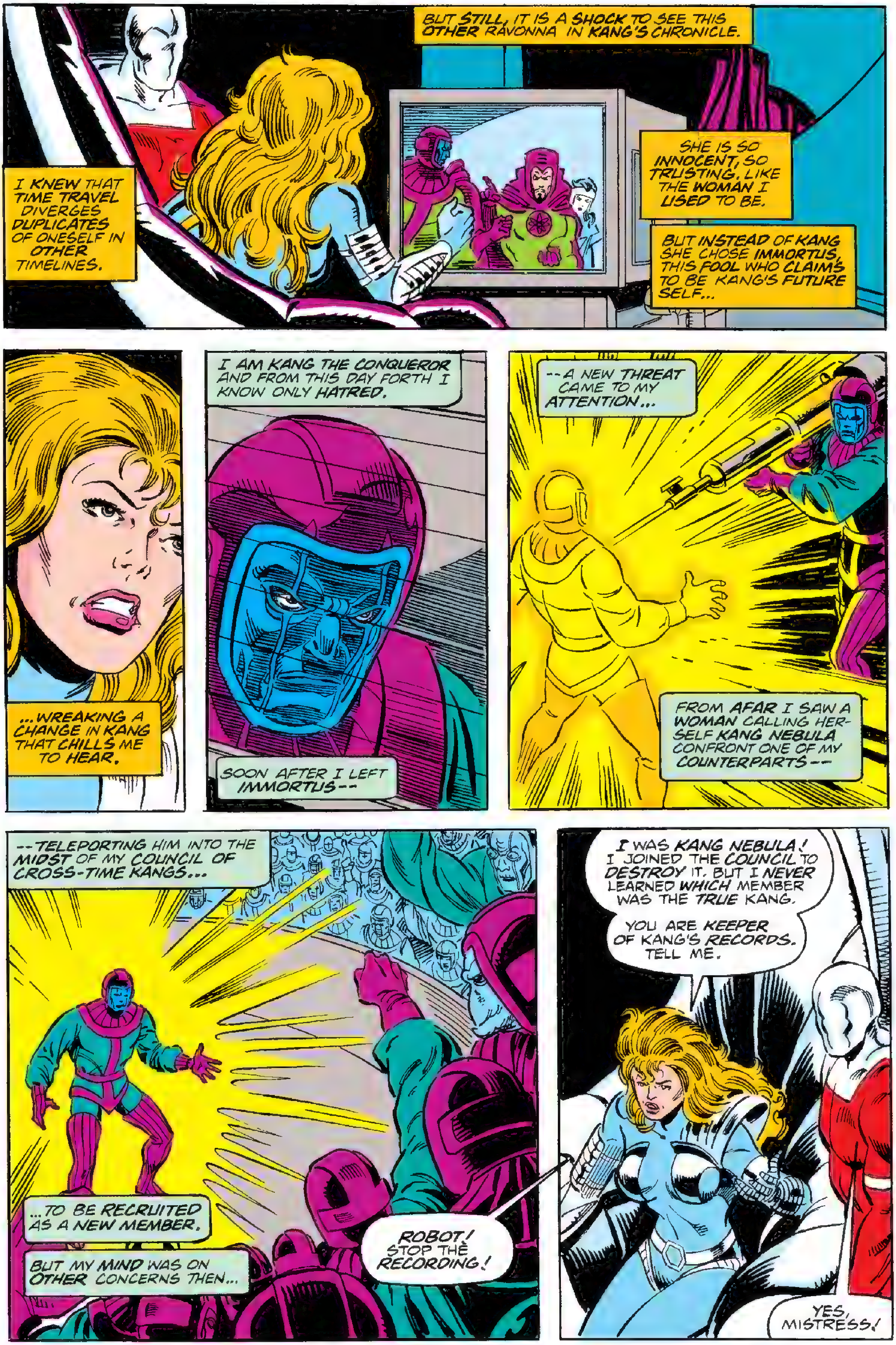

TWO CHANGES OF CLOTHING AND A SHORT WALK LATER...
THESE TINY TANKARDS ARE FIT FOR *CHILDREN!*
HAST THOU NOTHING *LARGER?*
WELL, WE HAST *PITCHERS,* BUT--
BRING ONE, PLEASE, MISS. AND DON'T *WORRY*--
HE COULD PROBABLY *DRINK* YOUR WHOLE NIGHT'S CLIENTELE UNDER THE *TABLE.*
AH, THIS TAVERN REMINDS ME OF ONE ON THE SLOPES OF *OLYMPUS!*
MANY WERE THE VICTORIOUS BATTLES I CELEBRATED THERE!
AND WHAT OF *THY* EXPLOITS FRIEND DANE?
TO BE *TRUTHFUL,* I DON'T REALLY *LIKE* TALKING ABOUT THE BATTLES I'VE FOUGHT.
I'D BE JUST AS HAPPY IF I *NEVER* HAD TO FIGHT *ANOTHER* ONE.
I DO NOT *UNDERSTAND.*
I JUST DON'T THINK THAT *VIOLENCE* IS ANYTHING TO TAKE *PLEASURE* IN, HERCULES. I FIGHT BECAUSE I *HAVE* TO, NOT BECAUSE I *ENJOY* IT...
...THE WAY *YOU* SEEM TO.
MOST OF THE TIME, I LOOK FOR WAYS TO *AVOID* IT.
THAT'S *SUPPOSED* TO BE PART OF OUR *JOB.*
AND THINKEST THOU THAT THE *GOD OF WAR* WOULD BE *IMPRESSED* BY THY LOFTY WORDS, MY FRIEND?
ALL *LIFE* IS WARFARE. JOY LIES IN THE *WINNING* OF IT.
TO DECRY THIS IS TO WHINE LIKE A SWADDLING *BABE*...OR A FEARFUL *WOMAN*--
EEEEEEEEEE!

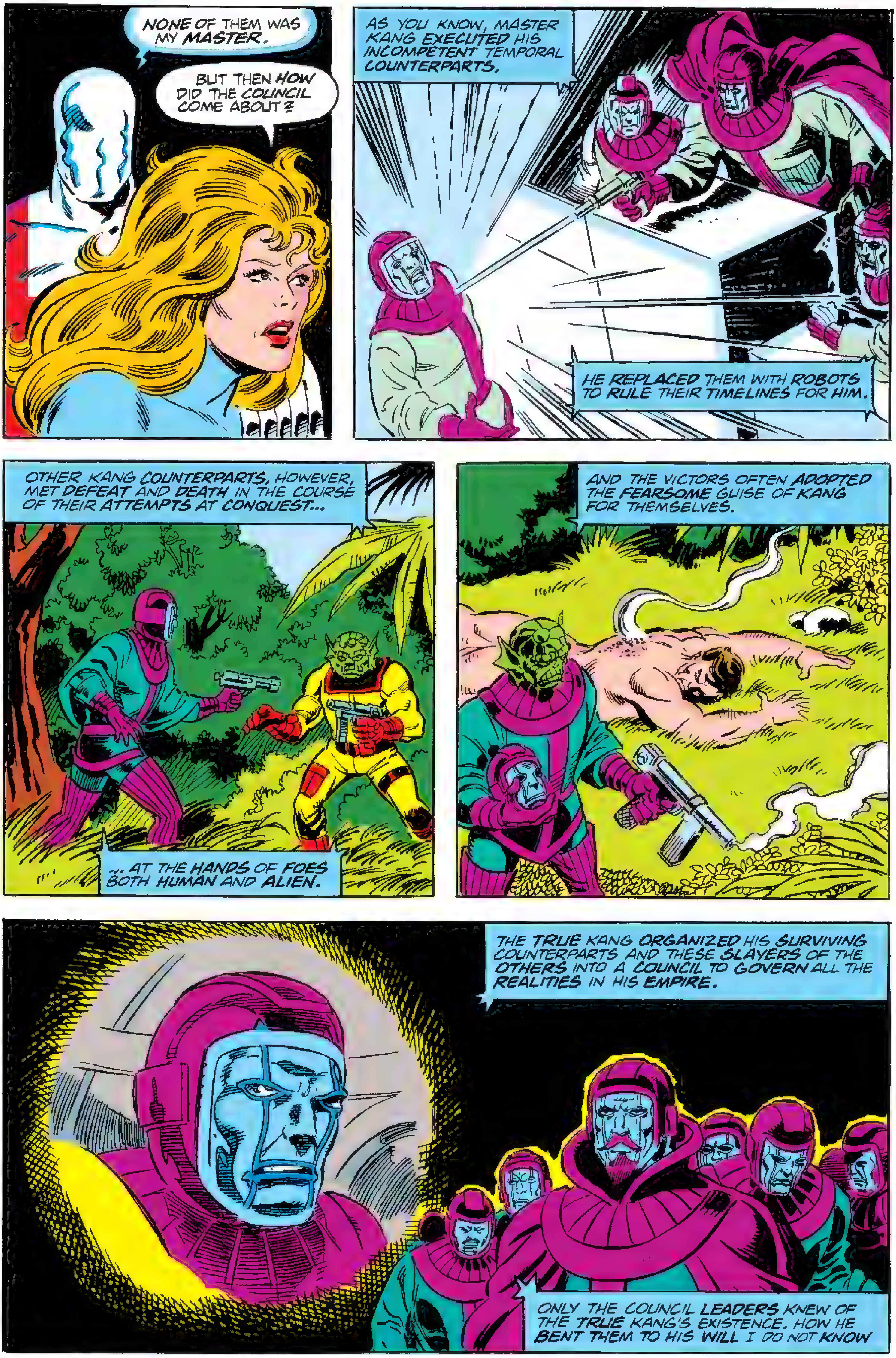

STOP IT!
AW, WHADDAYA *COMPLAININ'* FOR, BABY? YOU BEEN *EYEIN'* ME EVERY TIME YOU PASS THE *BAR*.
DANE--
I *SEE* IT.
SWEET THING WITH *YOUR* TALENTS GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN WAIT *TABLES*.
COME HOME WITH *ME* AND I'LL *SUGGEST* A FEW.
FAT CHANCE.
DANE--
KNOW *YOUR* PROBLEM, SUGAR? YOU GOT A *BAD ATTITUDE*.
REAL BAD.
THINK MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE YOU *OUT BACK* AND SHOW YOU HOW TO *TREAT* A MAN.
ANYWAY, I *KNOW* YOU WA-- *OW!*

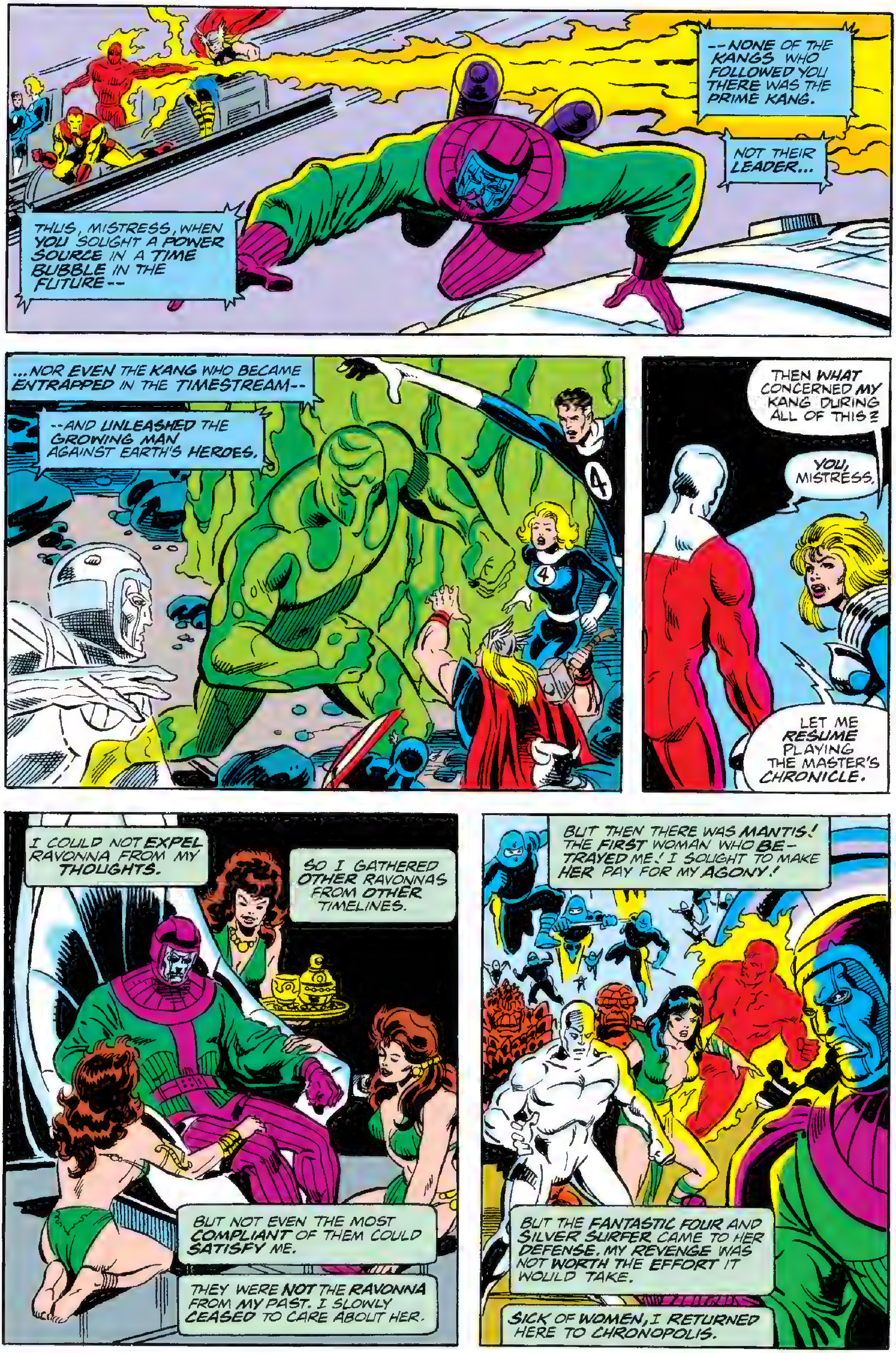

THAT'S ENOUGH.
THIS LADY'S GOT WORK TO DO. WHY DON'T YOU LET HER DO IT?
YOU WANT TO BE EATIN' GLASS, JACK, WE'LL BE GLAD TO HELP--
--SINCE THERE'S FIVE OF US--
--AND ONE OF YOU.
I SHALL BE MOST INTERESTED IN THE STRATEGY THOU INTEND TO EMPLOY, MY BRAVE KNIGHT!
HERCULES--JUST SITTING THERE--
WHOOPS.
BAM
OW! LEGGO MY ARM--
YER GONNA BREAK IT!
YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T.
THIS ENDS ONE OF TWO WAYS--
--EITHER YOU ALL LEAVE, RIGHT NOW--
--OR SOMEONE GETS HURT.
GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT.
NOBODY KNOWS HOW TO TAKE A JOKE ANYMORE.
WE WASN'T GONNA HURT ANYBODY.
I CAN DO BETTER THAN HER ANY NIGHT OF THE WEEK.

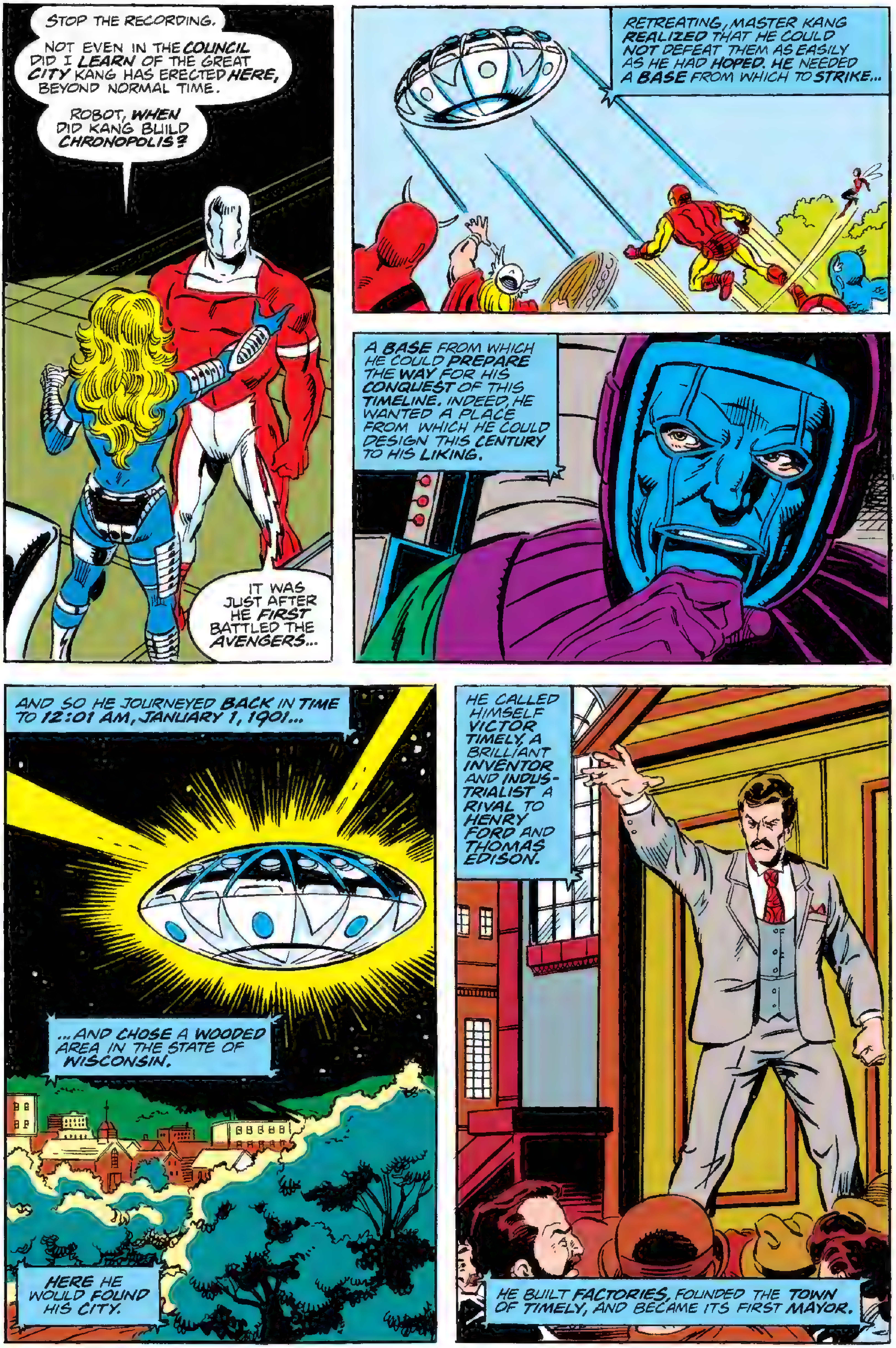

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR **HELP**, O LION OF OLYMPUS.
BUT, FRIEND DANE, I WAS ONLY TAKING THY **ADVICE!**
AND THY **STRATEGY** WAS **QUITE** WELL PLAYED.
'TWAS **FORTUNATE** THAT YON KNAVES WERE WILLING TO LISTEN TO **REASON**--
--ELSE THOU MIGHT HAVE TO ENGAGE IN--
--*SHUDDER*--
--**VIOLENCE.**
WHY, YOU **DEVIOUS**--
HEY, **GALAHAD.**
HI. ARE YOU--
I KNOW YOU **MEANT** WELL, BUT WE DON'T NEED ANYONE PLAYING **HERO** IN HERE.
I'VE BEEN WAITING TABLES FOR **SIX YEARS**, YOU KNOW. I'M A **BIG GIRL.**
INDEED, I AM SURE THAT A WOMAN OF YOUR **OBVIOUS** CHARMS NEEDS **NO AID** IN DEFENDING HERSELF.
IS THAT NOT **CORRECT**, FRIEND DANE?
NOW **THERE'S** A **GENTLEMAN** FOR YOU.
CAN YOU HOLD A **CONVERSATION** LIKE YOU HOLD YOUR **LIQUOR**, BIG GUY?
I CAN BUT **TRY**, FAIR ONE.
MAYHAP WE CAN FIND A MORE **CONGENIAL** ATMOSPHERE.
WHAT SAYEST THOU, FRIEND DANE?
OH, DON'T LET ME INTRUDE.
THEN I SHALL SEE THEE ON THE **MORROW**, MY FRIEND.
AND I THANK THEE **MOST HEARTILY** FOR THIS EVENING.
THOU HAST TAUGHT ME **MUCH** OF VALUE--
--AND I LOOK **FORWARD** TO **FUTURE** INSTRUCTION.
I'M NOT **SURE** WHAT JUST **HAPPENED**--
--BUT I'M **PRETTY** SURE I'VE BEEN **HAD.**
END.

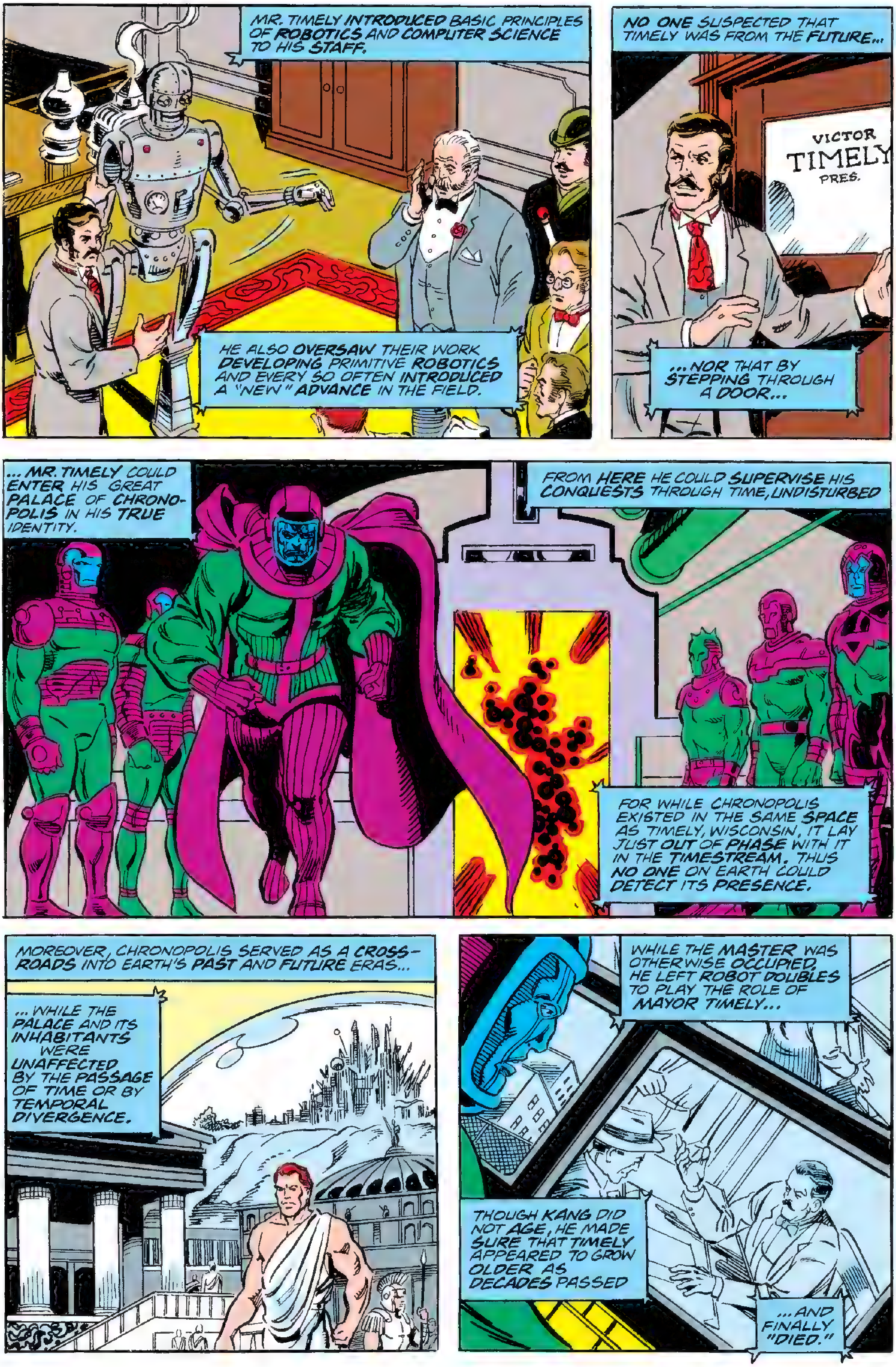

Stan Lee PRESENTS:
KANG THE PUZZLE
THE RULE OF KANG IS OVER. NOW HE LIES SUSPENDED BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.
EVEN AS I WAS...ONCE. HIS EMPIRE IS NOW MINE. I AM THE PRINCESS RAVONNA. BUT MY VICTORY IS HOLLOW.
I HAVE ONLY HIS OWN CHRONICLES OF HIS LIFE. FOR DAYS I HAVE SAT WATCHING THEM.
AND I AM NO CLOSER TO SOLVING THE ENIGMA OF KANG THAN I WAS BEFORE.

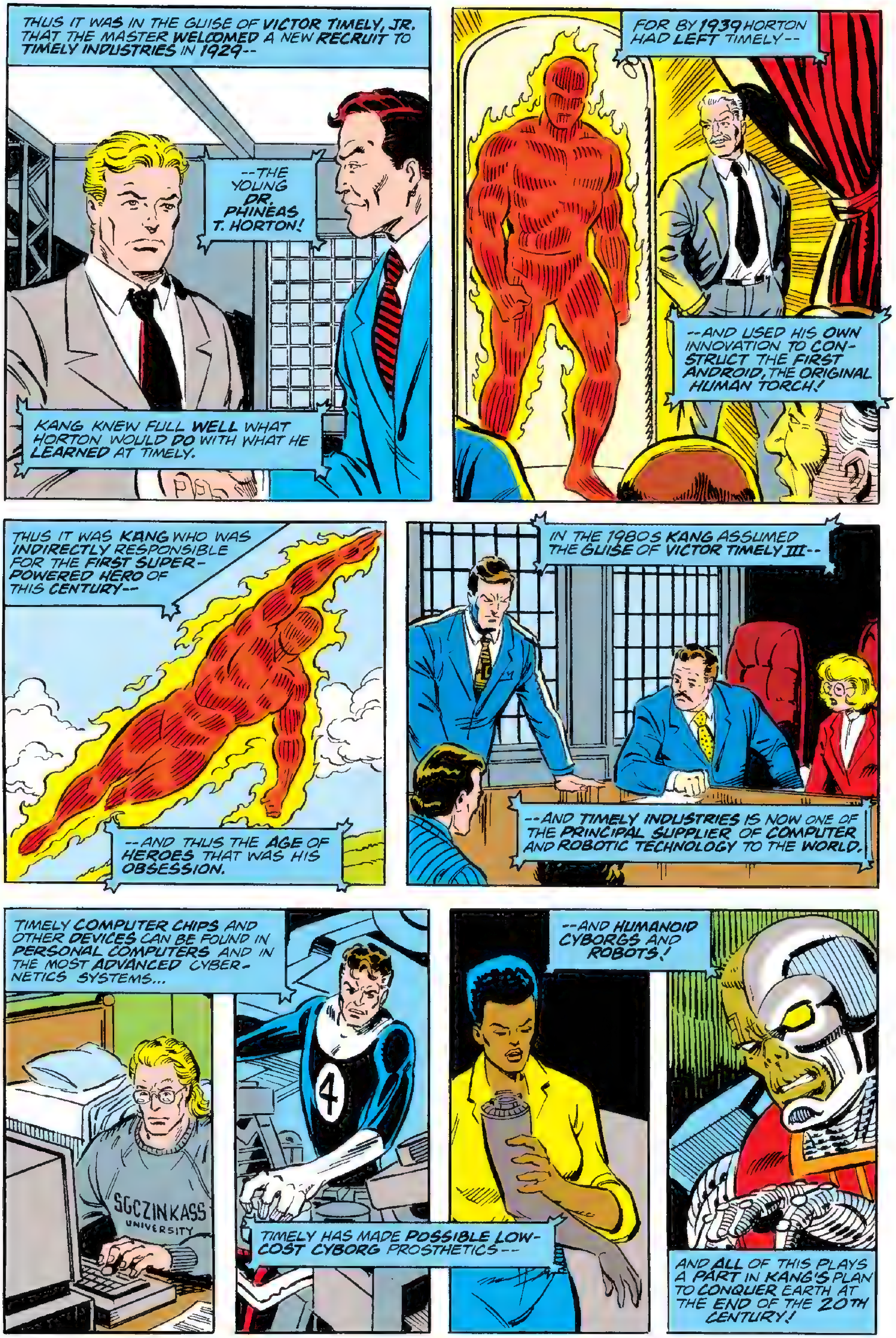

I KNEW THAT TIME TRAVEL DIVERGES DUPLICATES OF ONESELF IN OTHER TIMELINES.
BUT STILL, IT IS A SHOCK TO SEE THIS OTHER RAVONNA IN KANG'S CHRONICLE.
SHE IS SO INNOCENT, SO TRUSTING, LIKE THE WOMAN I USED TO BE.
BUT INSTEAD OF KANG SHE CHOSE IMMORTUS, THIS FOOL WHO CLAIMS TO BE KANG'S FUTURE SELF...
...WREAKING A CHANGE IN KANG THAT CHILLS ME TO HEAR.
I AM KANG THE CONQUEROR AND FROM THIS DAY FORTH I KNOW ONLY HATRED.
SOON AFTER I LEFT IMMORTUS--
--A NEW THREAT CAME TO MY ATTENTION...
FROM AFAR I SAW A WOMAN CALLING HERSELF KANG NEBULA CONFRONT ONE OF MY COUNTERPARTS--
--TELEPORTING HIM INTO THE MIDST OF MY COUNCIL OF CROSS-TIME KANGS...
...TO BE RECRUITED AS A NEW MEMBER.
BUT MY MIND WAS ON OTHER CONCERNS THEN...
ROBOT! STOP THE RECORDING!
I WAS KANG NEBULA! I JOINED THE COUNCIL TO DESTROY IT. BUT I NEVER LEARNED WHICH MEMBER WAS THE TRUE KANG.
YOU ARE KEEPER OF KANG'S RECORDS. TELL ME.
YES, MISTRESS!

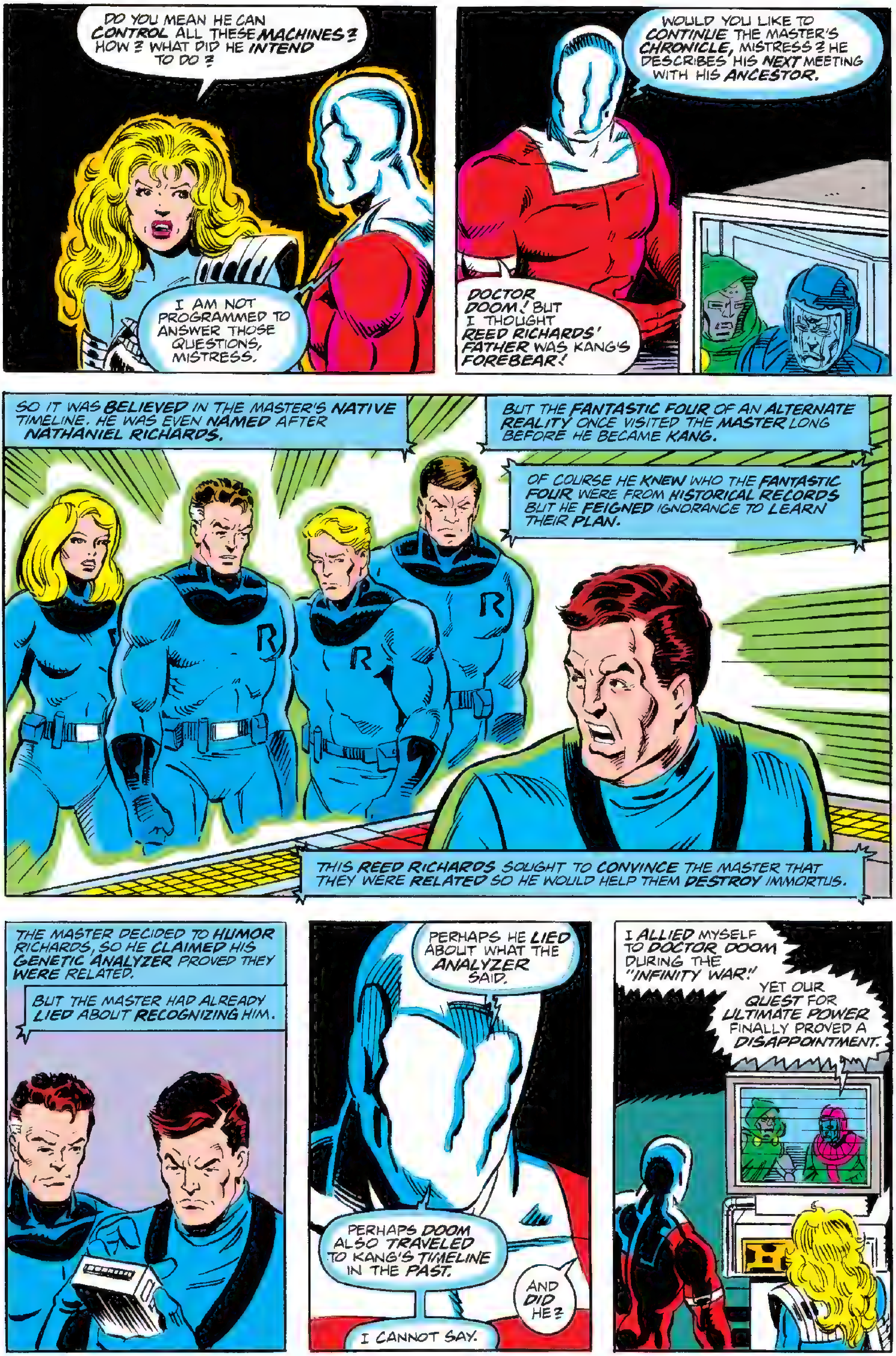

NONE OF THEM WAS MY MASTER.
BUT THEN HOW DID THE COUNCIL COME ABOUT?
AS YOU KNOW, MASTER KANG EXECUTED HIS INCOMPETENT TEMPORAL COUNTERPARTS.
HE REPLACED THEM WITH ROBOTS TO RULE THEIR TIMELINES FOR HIM.
OTHER KANG COUNTERPARTS, HOWEVER, MET DEFEAT AND DEATH IN THE COURSE OF THEIR ATTEMPTS AT CONQUEST...
...AT THE HANDS OF FOES BOTH HUMAN AND ALIEN.
AND THE VICTORS OFTEN ADOPTED THE FEARSOME GUISE OF KANG FOR THEMSELVES.
THE TRUE KANG ORGANIZED HIS SURVIVING COUNTERPARTS AND THESE SLAYERS OF THE OTHERS INTO A COUNCIL TO GOVERN ALL THE REALITIES IN HIS EMPIRE.
ONLY THE COUNCIL LEADERS KNEW OF THE TRUE KANG'S EXISTENCE. HOW HE BENT THEM TO HIS WILL I DO NOT KNOW

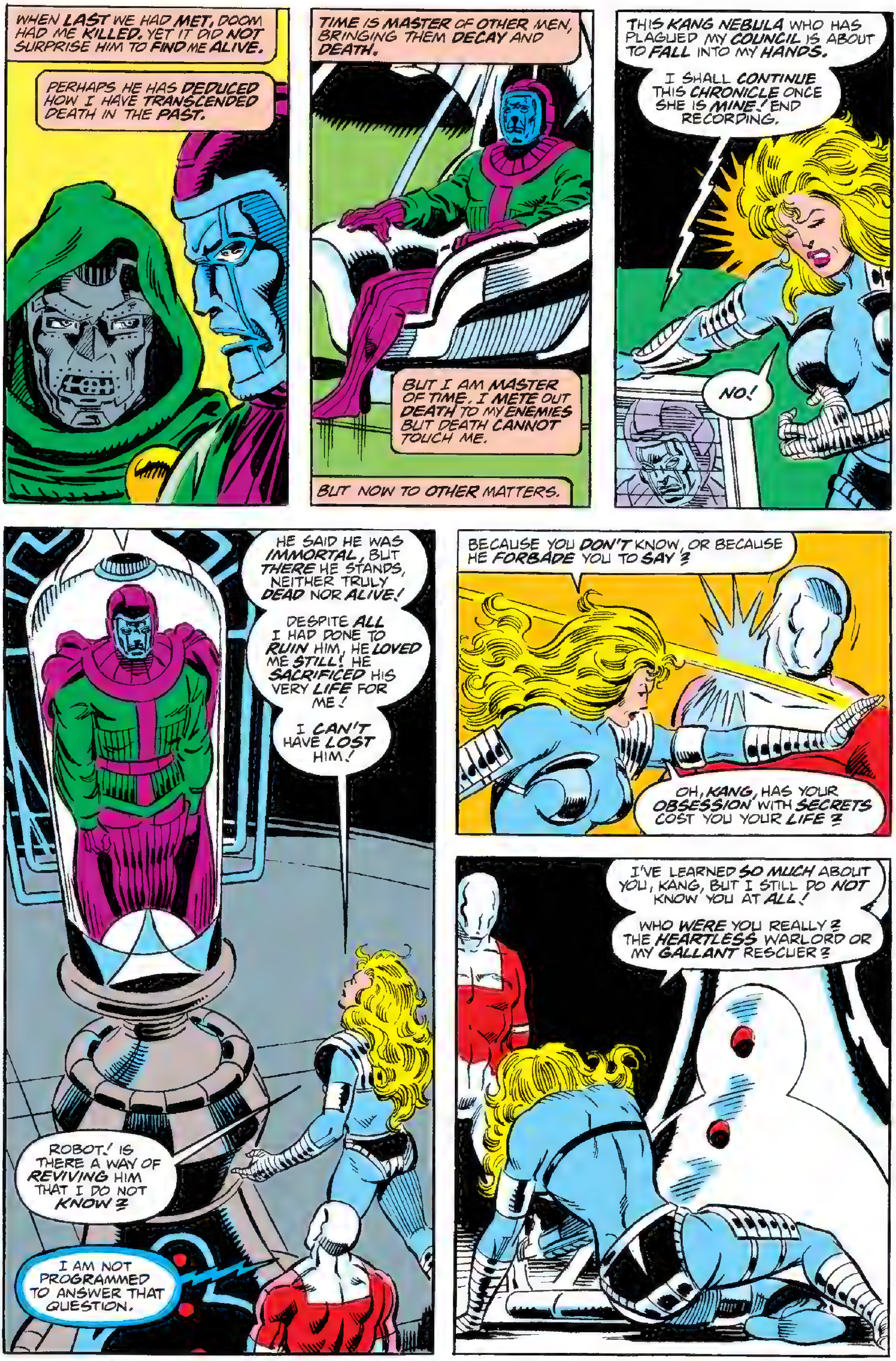

THUS, MISTRESS, WHEN YOU SOUGHT A POWER SOURCE IN A TIME BUBBLE IN THE FUTURE--
--NONE OF THE KANGS WHO FOLLOWED YOU THERE WAS THE PRIME KANG.
NOT THEIR LEADER...
...NOR EVEN THE KANG WHO BECAME ENTRAPPED IN THE TIMESTREAM--
--AND UNLEASHED THE GROWING MAN AGAINST EARTH'S HEROES.
4
4
THEN WHAT CONCERNED MY KANG DURING ALL OF THIS?
YOU, MISTRESS.
LET ME RESUME PLAYING THE MASTER'S CHRONICLE.
I COULD NOT EXPEL RAVONNA FROM MY THOUGHTS.
SO I GATHERED OTHER RAVONNAS FROM OTHER TIMELINES.
BUT NOT EVEN THE MOST COMPLIANT OF THEM COULD SATISFY ME.
THEY WERE NOT THE RAVONNA FROM MY PAST. I SLOWLY CEASED TO CARE ABOUT HER.
BUT THEN THERE WAS MANTIS! THE FIRST WOMAN WHO BETRAYED ME! I SOUGHT TO MAKE HER PAY FOR MY AGONY!
BUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND SILVER SURFER CAME TO HER DEFENSE. MY REVENGE WAS NOT WORTH THE EFFORT IT WOULD TAKE.
SICK OF WOMEN, I RETURNED HERE TO CHRONOPOLIS.

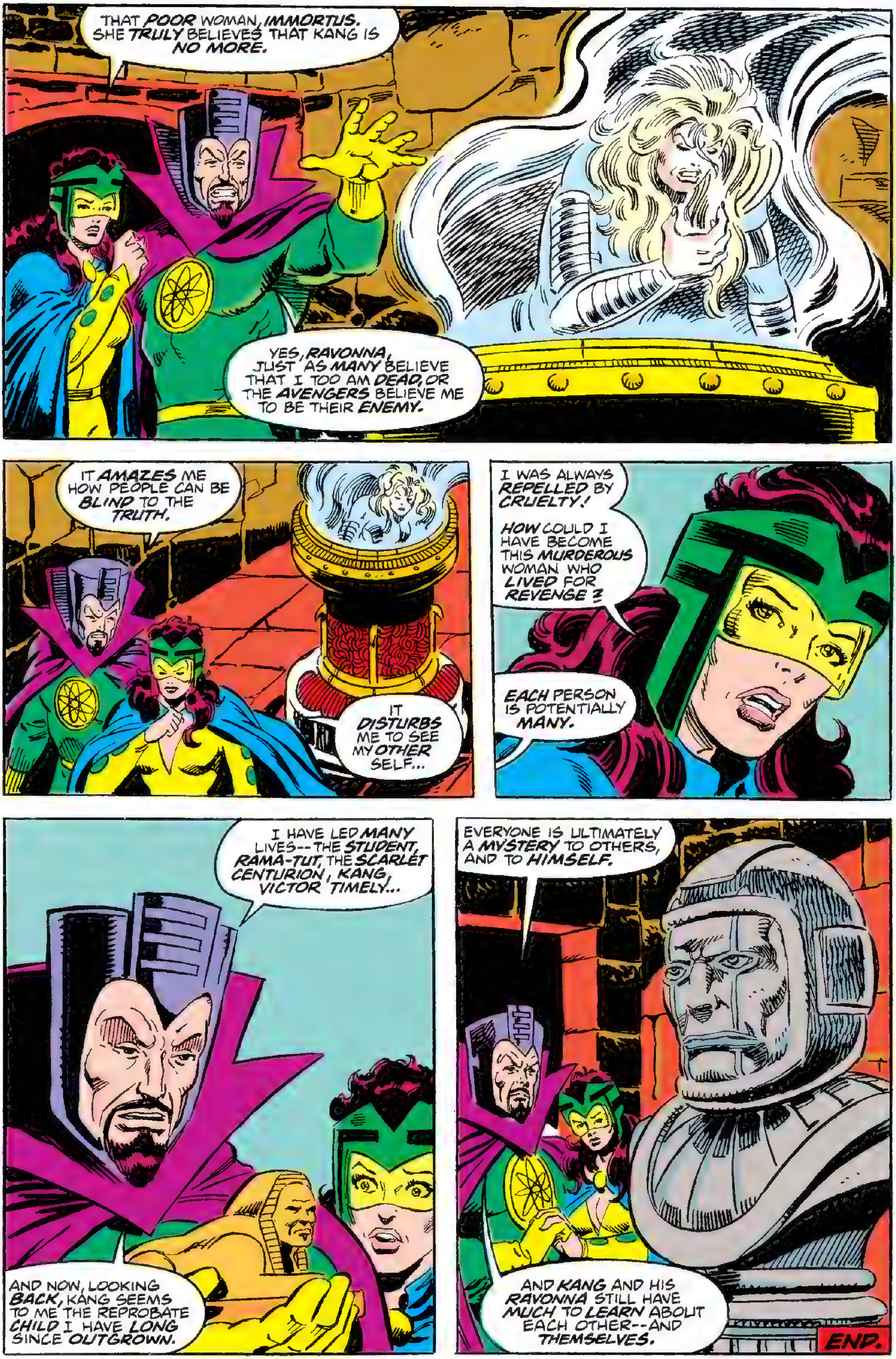

STOP THE RECORDING.
NOT EVEN IN THE COUNCIL DID I LEARN OF THE GREAT CITY KANG HAS ERECTED HERE, BEYOND NORMAL TIME.
ROBOT, WHEN DID KANG BUILD CHRONOPOLIS?
IT WAS JUST AFTER HE FIRST BATTLED THE AVENGERS...
RETREATING, MASTER KANG REALIZED THAT HE COULD NOT DEFEAT THEM AS EASILY AS HE HAD HOPED. HE NEEDED A BASE FROM WHICH TO STRIKE...
A BASE FROM WHICH HE COULD PREPARE THE WAY FOR HIS CONQUEST OF THIS TIMELINE. INDEED, HE WANTED A PLACE FROM WHICH HE COULD DESIGN THIS CENTURY TO HIS LIKING.
AND SO HE JOURNEYED BACK IN TIME TO 12:01 AM, JANUARY 1, 1901...
...AND CHOSE A WOODED AREA IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN.
HERE HE WOULD FOUND HIS CITY.
HE CALLED HIMSELF VICTOR TIMELY, A BRILLIANT INVENTOR AND INDUSTRIALIST A RIVAL TO HENRY FORD AND THOMAS EDISON.
HE BUILT FACTORIES, FOUNDED THE TOWN OF TIMELY, AND BECAME ITS FIRST MAYOR.


MR. TIMELY INTRODUCED BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ROBOTICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE TO HIS STAFF.
HE ALSO OVERSAW THEIR WORK DEVELOPING PRIMITIVE ROBOTICS AND EVERY SO OFTEN INTRODUCED A "NEW" ADVANCE IN THE FIELD.
NO ONE SUSPECTED THAT TIMELY WAS FROM THE FUTURE...
VICTOR TIMELY PRES.
...NOR THAT BY STEPPING THROUGH A DOOR...
...MR. TIMELY COULD ENTER HIS GREAT PALACE OF CHRONOPOLIS IN HIS TRUE IDENTITY.
FROM HERE HE COULD SUPERVISE HIS CONQUESTS THROUGH TIME, UNDISTURBED
FOR WHILE CHRONOPOLIS EXISTED IN THE SAME SPACE AS TIMELY, WISCONSIN, IT LAY JUST OUT OF PHASE WITH IT IN THE TIMESTREAM. THUS NO ONE ON EARTH COULD DETECT ITS PRESENCE.
MOREOVER, CHRONOPOLIS SERVED AS A CROSSROADS INTO EARTH'S PAST AND FUTURE ERAS...
...WHILE THE PALACE AND ITS INHABITANTS WERE UNAFFECTED BY THE PASSAGE OF TIME OR BY TEMPORAL DIVERGENCE.
WHILE THE MASTER WAS OTHERWISE OCCUPIED, HE LEFT ROBOT DOUBLES TO PLAY THE ROLE OF MAYOR TIMELY...
THOUGH KANG DID NOT AGE, HE MADE SURE THAT TIMELY APPEARED TO GROW OLDER AS DECADES PASSED
...AND FINALLY "DIED."


THUS IT WAS IN THE GUISE OF VICTOR TIMELY, JR. THAT THE MASTER WELCOMED A NEW RECRUIT TO TIMELY INDUSTRIES IN 1929--
--THE YOUNG DR. PHINEAS T. HORTON!
KANG KNEW FULL WELL WHAT HORTON WOULD DO WITH WHAT HE LEARNED AT TIMELY.
FOR BY 1939 HORTON HAD LEFT TIMELY--
--AND USED HIS OWN INNOVATION TO CONSTRUCT THE FIRST ANDROID, THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH!
THUS IT WAS KANG WHO WAS INDIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FIRST SUPER-POWERED HERO OF THIS CENTURY--
--AND THUS THE AGE OF HEROES THAT WAS HIS OBSESSION.
IN THE 1980S KANG ASSUMED THE GUISE OF VICTOR TIMELY III--
--AND TIMELY INDUSTRIES IS NOW ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER OF COMPUTER AND ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY TO THE WORLD.
TIMELY COMPUTER CHIPS AND OTHER DEVICES CAN BE FOUND IN PERSONAL COMPUTERS AND IN THE MOST ADVANCED CYBERNETICS SYSTEMS...
SGCZINKASS UNIVERSITY
4
TIMELY HAS MADE POSSIBLE LOW-COST CYBORG PROSTHETICS--
--AND HUMANOID CYBORGS AND ROBOTS!
AND ALL OF THIS PLAYS A PART IN KANG'S PLAN TO CONQUER EARTH AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY!


DO YOU MEAN HE CAN CONTROL ALL THESE MACHINES? HOW? WHAT DID HE INTEND TO DO?
I AM NOT PROGRAMMED TO ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS, MISTRESS.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE THE MASTER'S CHRONICLE, MISTRESS? HE DESCRIBES HIS NEXT MEETING WITH HIS ANCESTOR.
DOCTOR DOOM! BUT I THOUGHT REED RICHARDS' FATHER WAS KANG'S FOREBEAR!
SO IT WAS BELIEVED IN THE MASTER'S NATIVE TIMELINE. HE WAS EVEN NAMED AFTER NATHANIEL RICHARDS.
BUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR OF AN ALTERNATE REALITY ONCE VISITED THE MASTER LONG BEFORE HE BECAME KANG.
OF COURSE HE KNEW WHO THE FANTASTIC FOUR WERE FROM HISTORICAL RECORDS BUT HE FEIGNED IGNORANCE TO LEARN THEIR PLAN.
R
R
R
THIS REED RICHARDS SOUGHT TO CONVINCE THE MASTER THAT THEY WERE RELATED SO HE WOULD HELP THEM DESTROY IMMORTUS.
THE MASTER DECIDED TO HUMOR RICHARDS, SO HE CLAIMED HIS GENETIC ANALYZER PROVED THEY WERE RELATED.
BUT THE MASTER HAD ALREADY LIED ABOUT RECOGNIZING HIM.
PERHAPS HE LIED ABOUT WHAT THE ANALYZER SAID.
PERHAPS DOOM ALSO TRAVELED TO KANG'S TIMELINE IN THE PAST.
AND DID HE?
I CANNOT SAY.
I ALLIED MYSELF TO DOCTOR DOOM DURING THE "INFINITY WAR."
YET OUR QUEST FOR ULTIMATE POWER FINALLY PROVED A DISAPPOINTMENT.

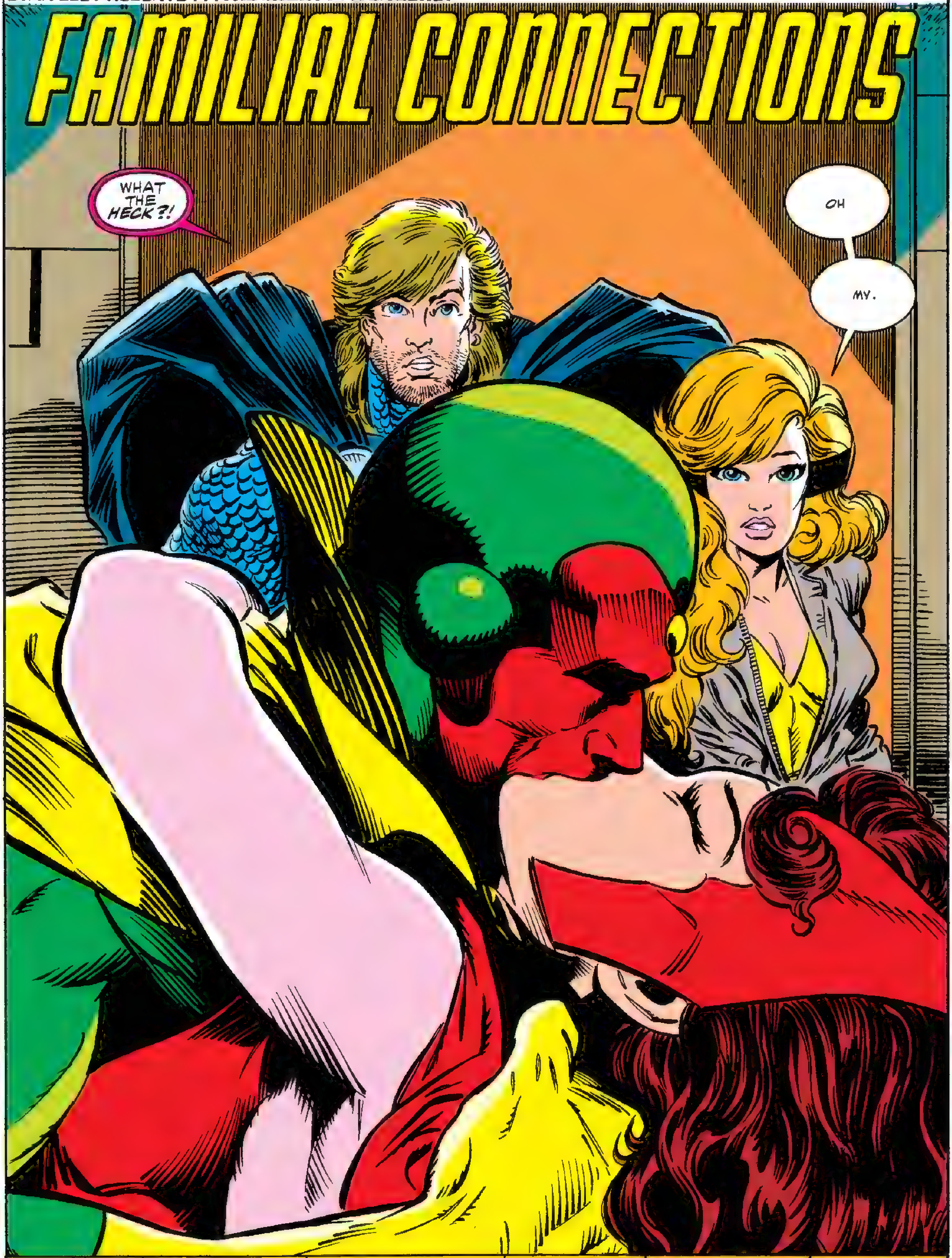

WHEN LAST WE HAD MET, DOOM HAD ME KILLED. YET IT DID NOT SURPRISE HIM TO FIND ME ALIVE.
PERHAPS HE HAS DEDUCED HOW I HAVE TRANSCENDED DEATH IN THE PAST.
TIME IS MASTER OF OTHER MEN, BRINGING THEM DECAY AND DEATH.
BUT I AM MASTER OF TIME. I METE OUT DEATH TO MY ENEMIES BUT DEATH CANNOT TOUCH ME.
BUT NOW TO OTHER MATTERS.
THIS KANG NEBULA WHO HAS PLAGUED MY COUNCIL IS ABOUT TO FALL INTO MY HANDS.
I SHALL CONTINUE THIS CHRONICLE ONCE SHE IS MINE! END RECORDING.
NO!
HE SAID HE WAS IMMORTAL, BUT THERE HE STANDS, NEITHER TRULY DEAD NOR ALIVE!
DESPITE ALL I HAD DONE TO RUIN HIM, HE LOVED ME STILL! HE SACRIFICED HIS VERY LIFE FOR ME!
I CAN'T HAVE LOST HIM!
ROBOT! IS THERE A WAY OF REVIVING HIM THAT I DO NOT KNOW?
I AM NOT PROGRAMMED TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION.
BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW, OR BECAUSE HE FORBADE YOU TO SAY?
OH, KANG, HAS YOUR OBSESSION WITH SECRETS COST YOU YOUR LIFE?
I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT YOU, KANG, BUT I STILL DO NOT KNOW YOU AT ALL!
WHO WERE YOU REALLY? THE HEARTLESS WARLORD OR MY GALLANT RESCUER?


THAT *POOR* WOMAN, *IMMORTUS*. SHE *TRULY* BELIEVES THAT KANG IS *NO MORE*.
YES, *RAVONNA*, JUST AS *MANY* BELIEVE THAT I TOO AM *DEAD*, OR THE *AVENGERS* BELIEVE ME TO BE THEIR *ENEMY*.
IT *AMAZES* ME HOW PEOPLE CAN BE *BLIND* TO THE *TRUTH*.
IT *DISTURBS* ME TO SEE MY *OTHER* SELF...
I WAS ALWAYS *REPELLED* BY *CRUELTY*!
HOW COULD I HAVE BECOME THIS *MURDEROUS* WOMAN WHO *LIVED* FOR *REVENGE*?
EACH PERSON IS POTENTIALLY *MANY*.
I HAVE LED *MANY* LIVES-- THE *STUDENT*, *RAMA-TUT*, THE *SCARLET CENTURION*, *KANG*, *VICTOR TIMELY*...
AND NOW, LOOKING *BACK*, KANG SEEMS TO ME THE REPROBATE *CHILD* I HAVE *LONG* SINCE *OUTGROWN*.
EVERYONE IS ULTIMATELY A *MYSTERY* TO OTHERS, AND TO *HIMSELF*.
AND *KANG* AND HIS *RAVONNA* STILL HAVE *MUCH* TO *LEARN* ABOUT EACH OTHER--AND *THEMSELVES*.
END.

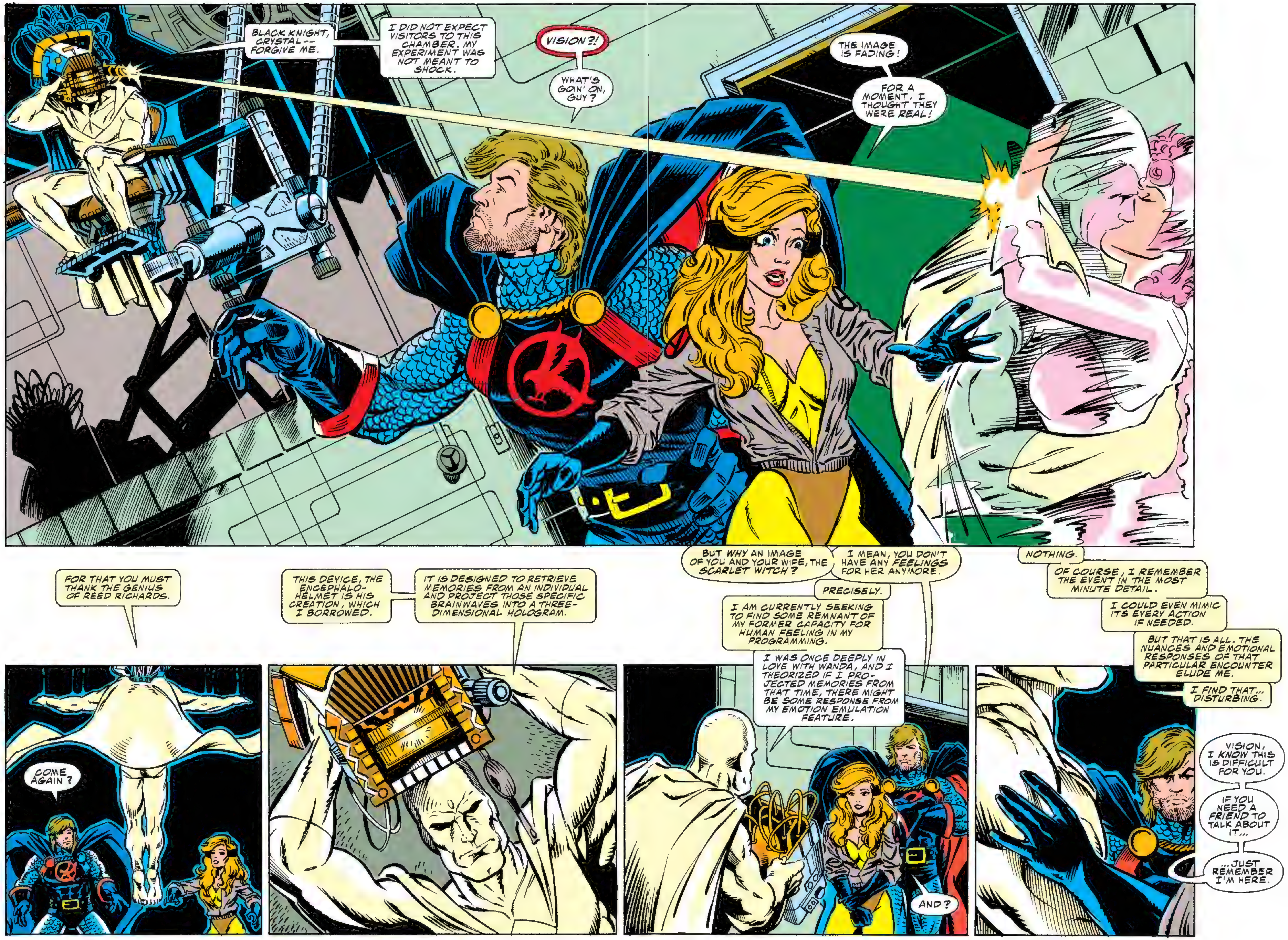
MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
© 1992 MARVEL ENT GROUP, INC
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN UK 70p
348
JUNE
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
EPTING — PALMER

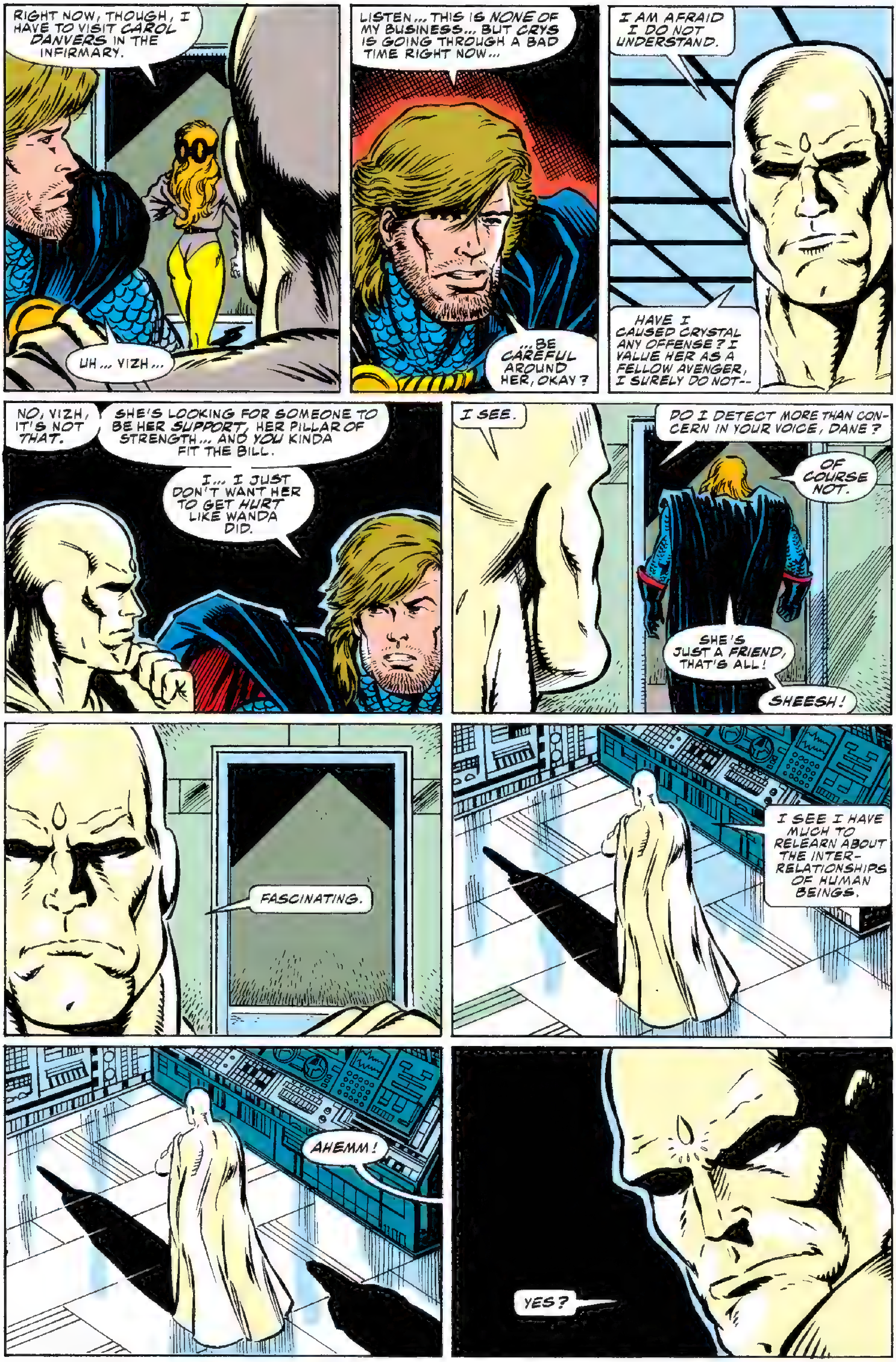
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND! STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

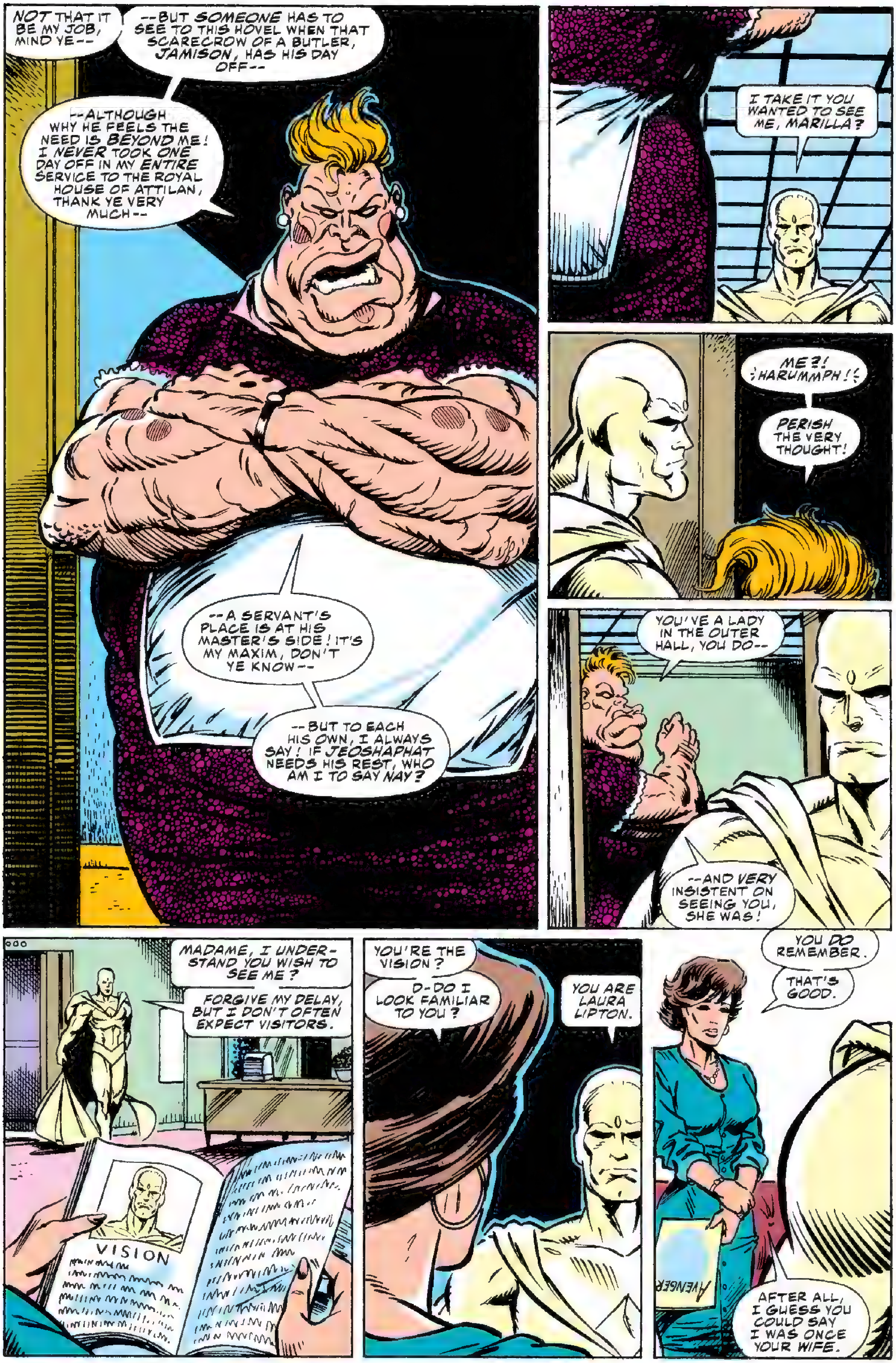
FAMILIAL CONNECTIONS

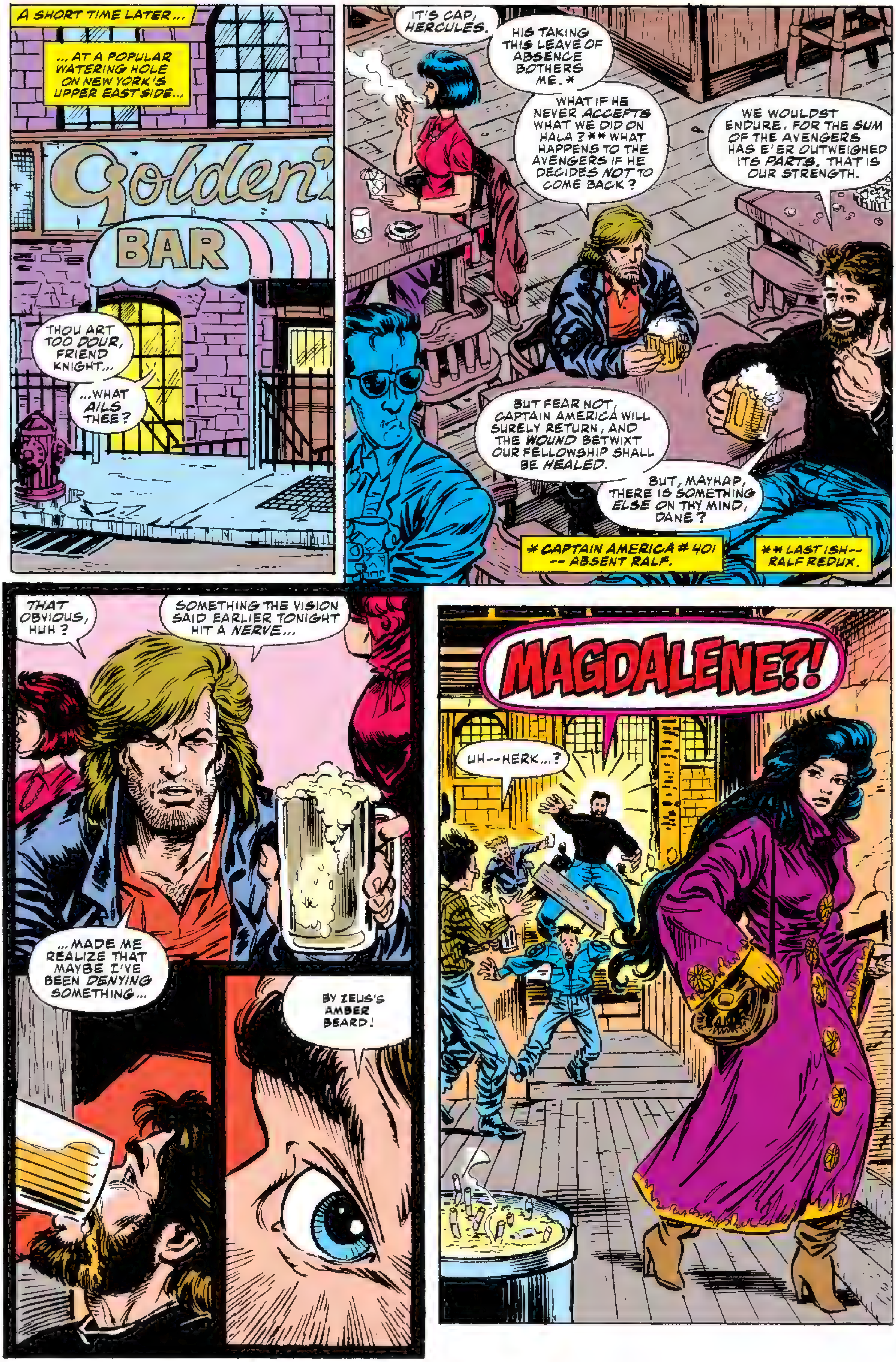


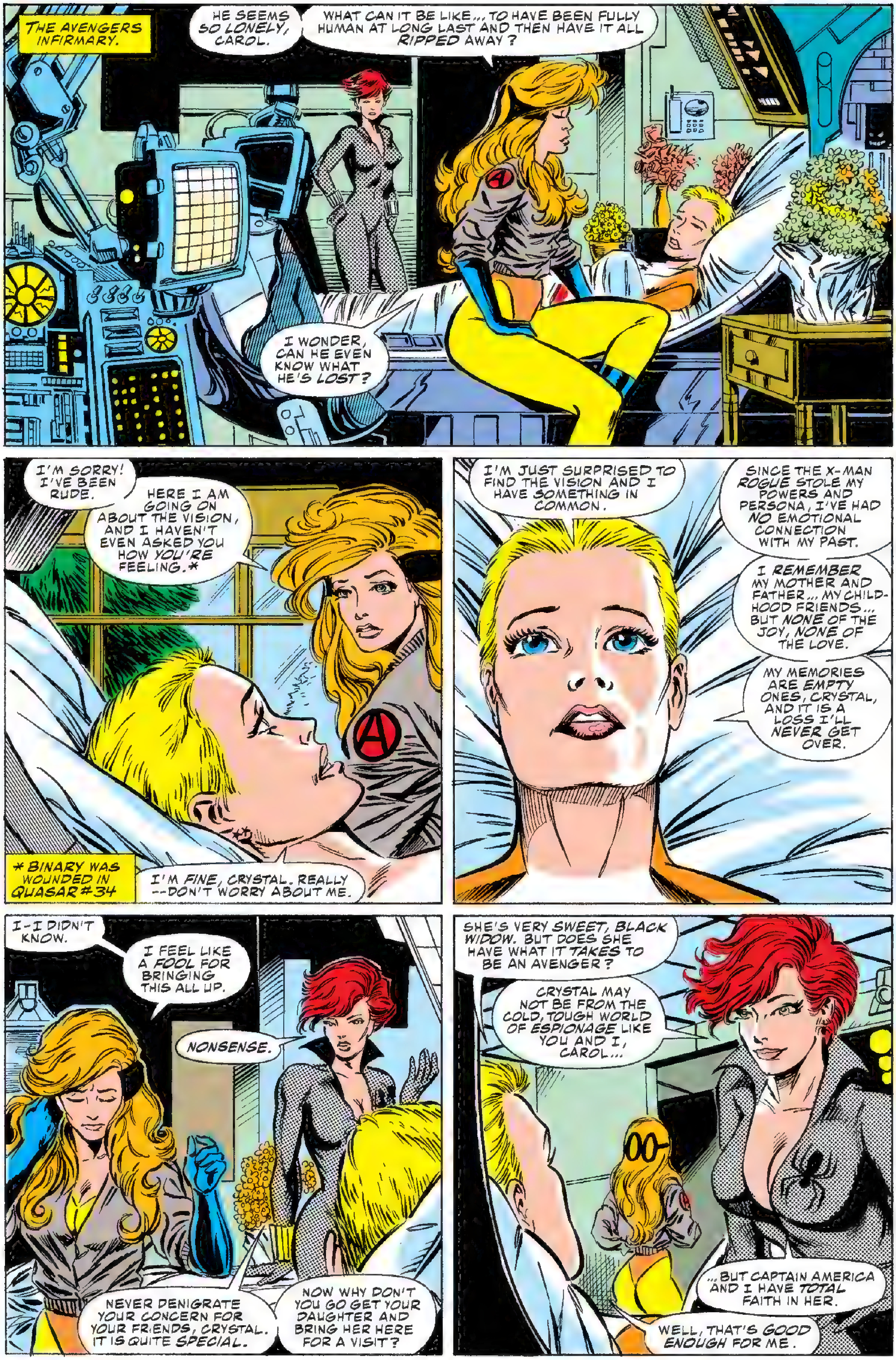
BOB HARRAS WRITER | KIRK JARVINEN GUEST PENCILER | TOM PALMER INKER & COLORIST | BILL OAKLEY LETTERER | RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR | TOM DEFALCO ED. IN CHIEF

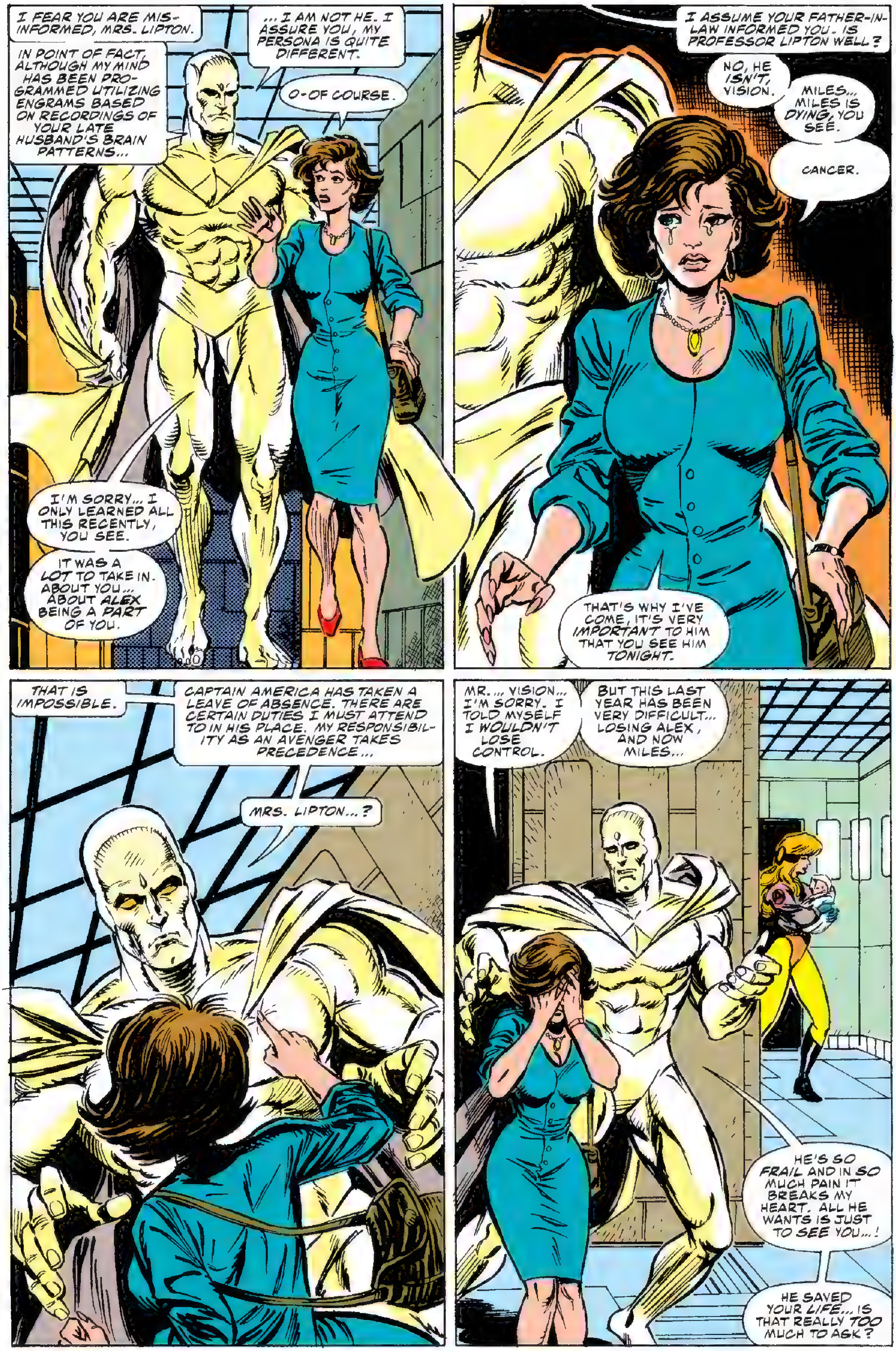

BLACK KNIGHT, CRYSTAL-- FORGIVE ME.
I DID NOT EXPECT VISITORS TO THIS CHAMBER. MY EXPERIMENT WAS NOT MEANT TO SHOCK.
VISION?!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON, GUY?
THE IMAGE IS FADING!
FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT THEY WERE *REAL*!
FOR THAT YOU MUST THANK THE GENIUS OF REED RICHARDS.
COME AGAIN?
THIS DEVICE, THE ENCEPHALO-HELMET IS HIS CREATION, WHICH I BORROWED.
IT IS DESIGNED TO RETRIEVE MEMORIES FROM AN INDIVIDUAL AND PROJECT THOSE SPECIFIC BRAINWAVES INTO A THREE-DIMENSIONAL HOLOGRAM.
BUT *WHY* AN IMAGE OF YOU AND YOUR WIFE, THE *SCARLET WITCH*?
I MEAN, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY *FEELINGS* FOR HER ANYMORE.
PRECISELY.
I AM CURRENTLY SEEKING TO FIND SOME REMNANT OF MY FORMER CAPACITY FOR HUMAN FEELING IN MY PROGRAMMING.
I WAS ONCE DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH WANDA, AND I THEORIZED IF I PROJECTED MEMORIES FROM THAT TIME, THERE MIGHT BE SOME RESPONSE FROM MY EMOTION EMULATION FEATURE.
AND?
NOTHING.
OF COURSE, I REMEMBER THE EVENT IN THE MOST MINUTE DETAIL.
I COULD EVEN MIMIC ITS EVERY ACTION IF NEEDED.
BUT THAT IS ALL. THE NUANCES AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSES OF THAT PARTICULAR ENCOUNTER ELUDE ME.
I FIND THAT... DISTURBING.
VISION, I *KNOW* THIS IS DIFFICULT FOR YOU.
IF YOU NEED A *FRIEND* TO TALK ABOUT IT...
...JUST REMEMBER I'M HERE.

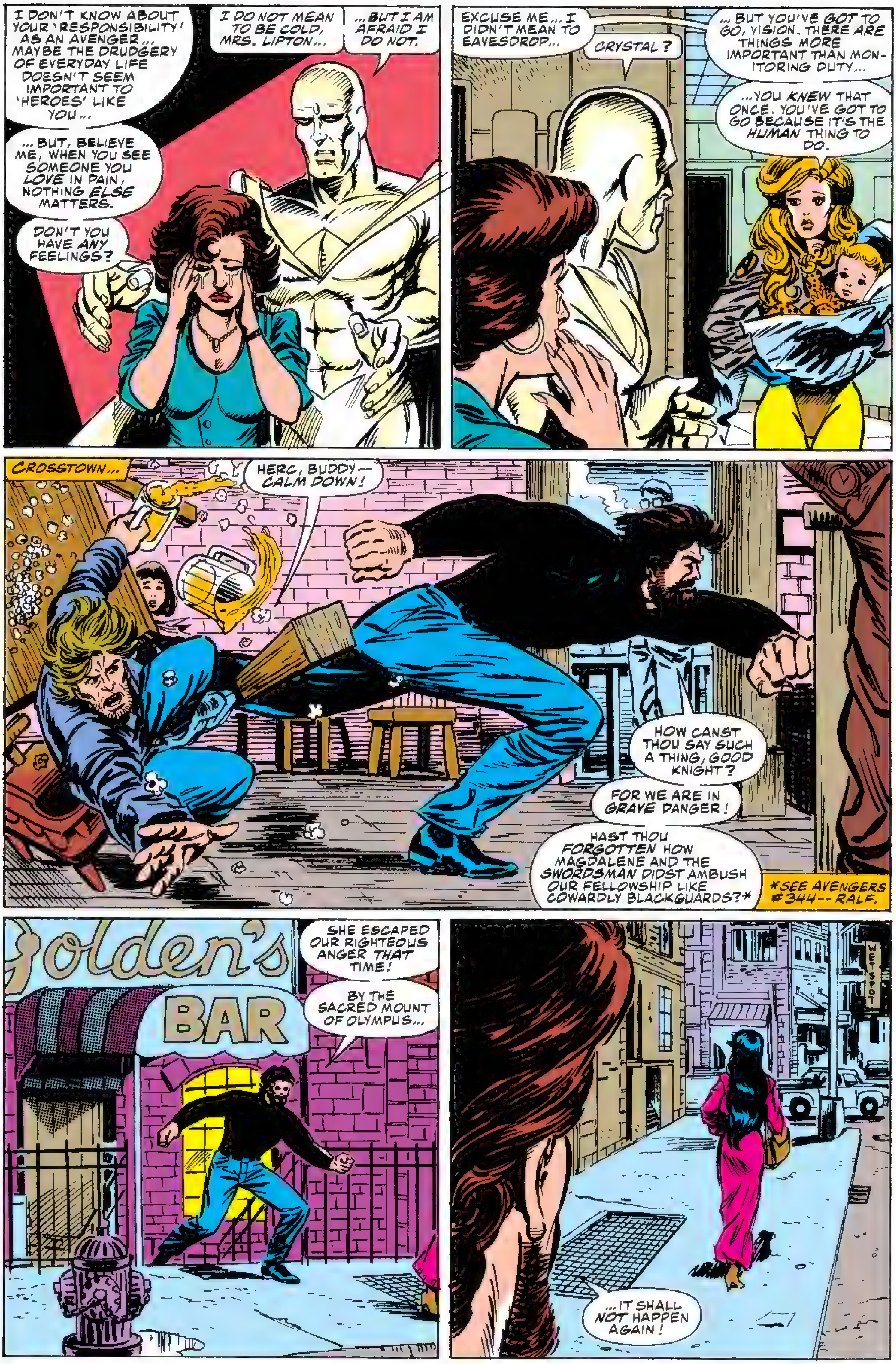

RIGHT NOW, THOUGH, I HAVE TO VISIT CAROL DANVERS IN THE INFIRMARY.
UH... VIZH...
LISTEN... THIS IS NONE OF MY BUSINESS... BUT CRYS IS GOING THROUGH A BAD TIME RIGHT NOW...
...BE CAREFUL AROUND HER, OKAY?
I AM AFRAID I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
HAVE I CAUSED CRYSTAL ANY OFFENSE? I VALUE HER AS A FELLOW AVENGER, I SURELY DO NOT--
NO, VIZH, IT'S NOT THAT.
SHE'S LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO BE HER SUPPORT, HER PILLAR OF STRENGTH... AND YOU KINDA FIT THE BILL.
I... I JUST DON'T WANT HER TO GET HURT LIKE WANDA DID.
I SEE.
DO I DETECT MORE THAN CONCERN IN YOUR VOICE, DANE?
OF COURSE NOT.
SHE'S JUST A FRIEND, THAT'S ALL!
SHEESH!
FASCINATING.
I SEE I HAVE MUCH TO RELEARN ABOUT THE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF HUMAN BEINGS.
AHEMM!
YES?

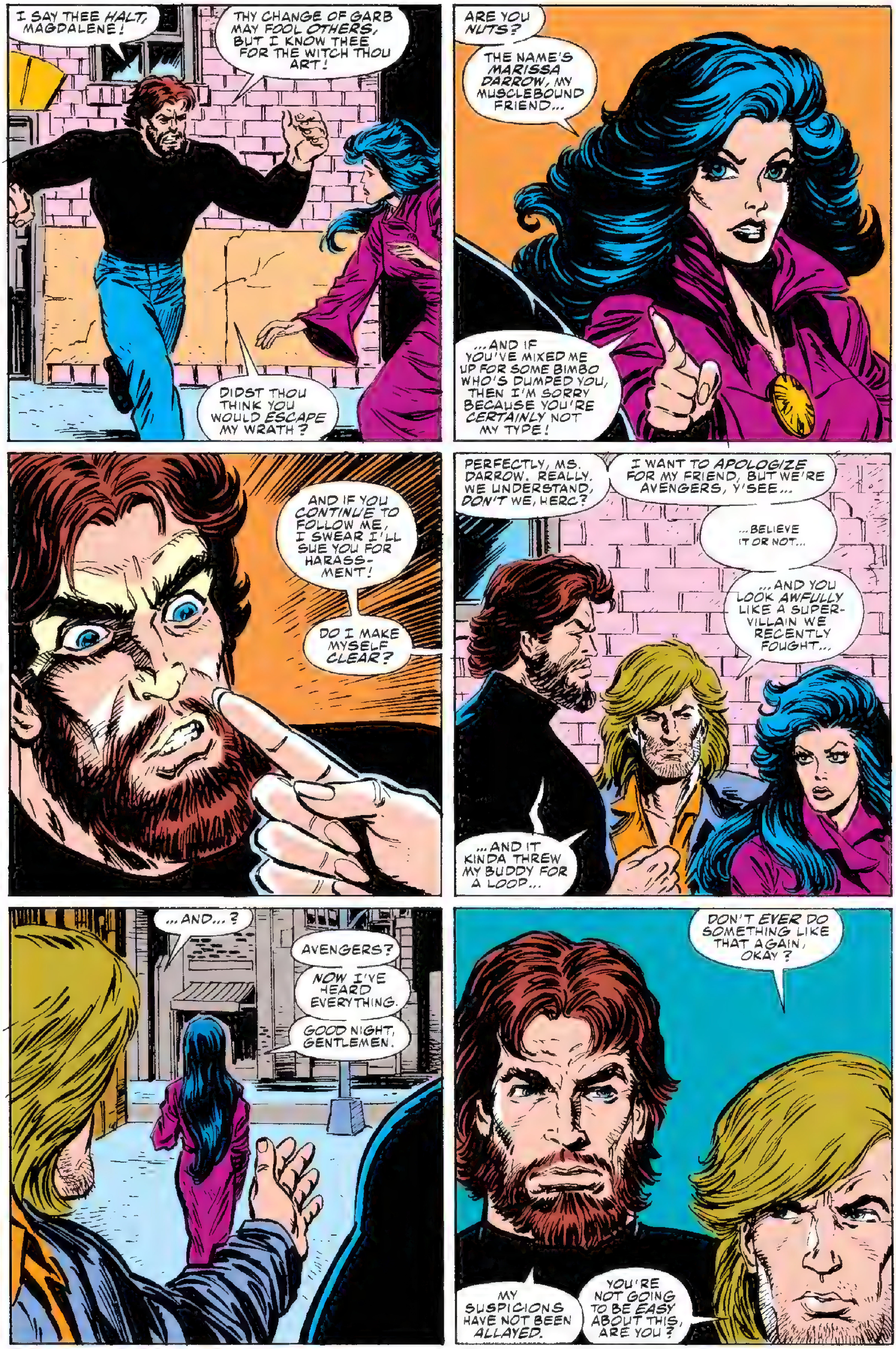

NOT THAT IT BE MY JOB, MIND YE--
--BUT SOMEONE HAS TO SEE TO THIS HOVEL WHEN THAT SCARECROW OF A BUTLER, JAMISON, HAS HIS DAY OFF--
--ALTHOUGH WHY HE FEELS THE NEED IS BEYOND ME! I NEVER TOOK ONE DAY OFF IN MY ENTIRE SERVICE TO THE ROYAL HOUSE OF ATTILAN, THANK YE VERY MUCH--
--A SERVANT'S PLACE IS AT HIS MASTER'S SIDE! IT'S MY MAXIM, DON'T YE KNOW--
--BUT TO EACH HIS OWN, I ALWAYS SAY! IF JEOSHAPHAT NEEDS HIS REST, WHO AM I TO SAY NAY?
I TAKE IT YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, MARILLA?
ME?! HARUMMPH!
PERISH THE VERY THOUGHT!
YOU'VE A LADY IN THE OUTER HALL, YOU DO--
--AND VERY INSISTENT ON SEEING YOU, SHE WAS!
MADAME, I UNDERSTAND YOU WISH TO SEE ME?
FORGIVE MY DELAY, BUT I DON'T OFTEN EXPECT VISITORS.
VISION
YOU'RE THE VISION?
D-DO I LOOK FAMILIAR TO YOU?
YOU ARE LAURA LIPTON.
YOU DO REMEMBER.
THAT'S GOOD.
AFTER ALL, I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I WAS ONCE YOUR WIFE.

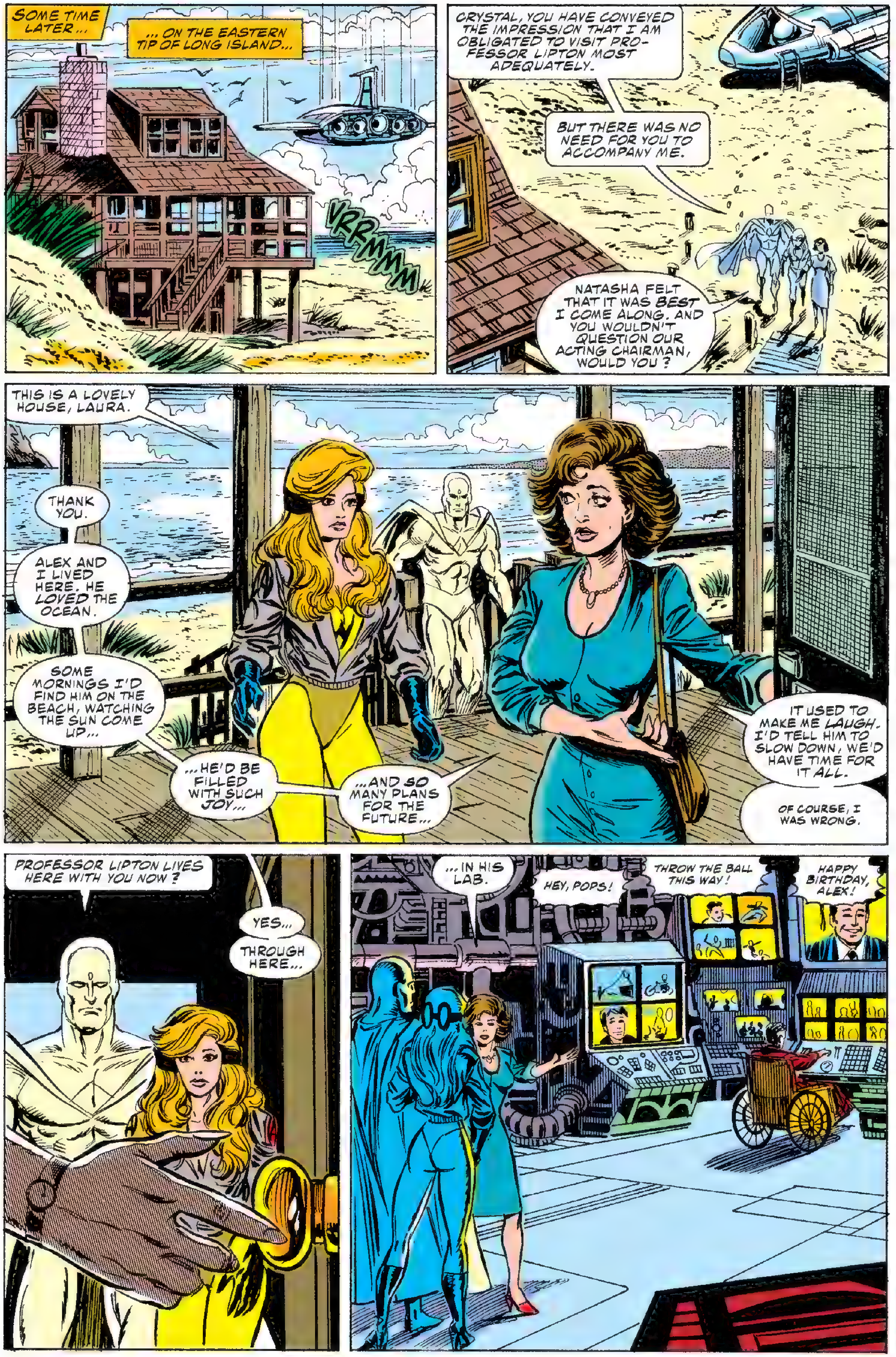

A SHORT TIME LATER...
...AT A POPULAR WATERING HOLE ON NEW YORK'S UPPER EAST SIDE...
Golden's
BAR
THOU ART TOO DOUR, FRIEND KNIGHT...
...WHAT AILS THEE?
IT'S CAP, HERCULES.
HIS TAKING THIS LEAVE OF ABSENCE BOTHERS ME.*
WHAT IF HE NEVER ACCEPTS WHAT WE DID ON HALA?** WHAT HAPPENS TO THE AVENGERS IF HE DECIDES NOT TO COME BACK?
WE WOULDST ENDURE, FOR THE SUM OF THE AVENGERS HAS E'ER OUTWEIGHED ITS PARTS. THAT IS OUR STRENGTH.
BUT FEAR NOT, CAPTAIN AMERICA WILL SURELY RETURN, AND THE WOUND BETWIXT OUR FELLOWSHIP SHALL BE HEALED.
BUT, MAYHAP, THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE ON THY MIND, DANE?
* CAPTAIN AMERICA #401 -- ABSENT RALF.
** LAST ISH-- RALF REDUX.
THAT OBVIOUS, HUH?
SOMETHING THE VISION SAID EARLIER TONIGHT HIT A NERVE...
...MADE ME REALIZE THAT MAYBE I'VE BEEN DENYING SOMETHING...
BY ZEUS'S AMBER BEARD!
MAGDALENE?!
UH--HERK...?

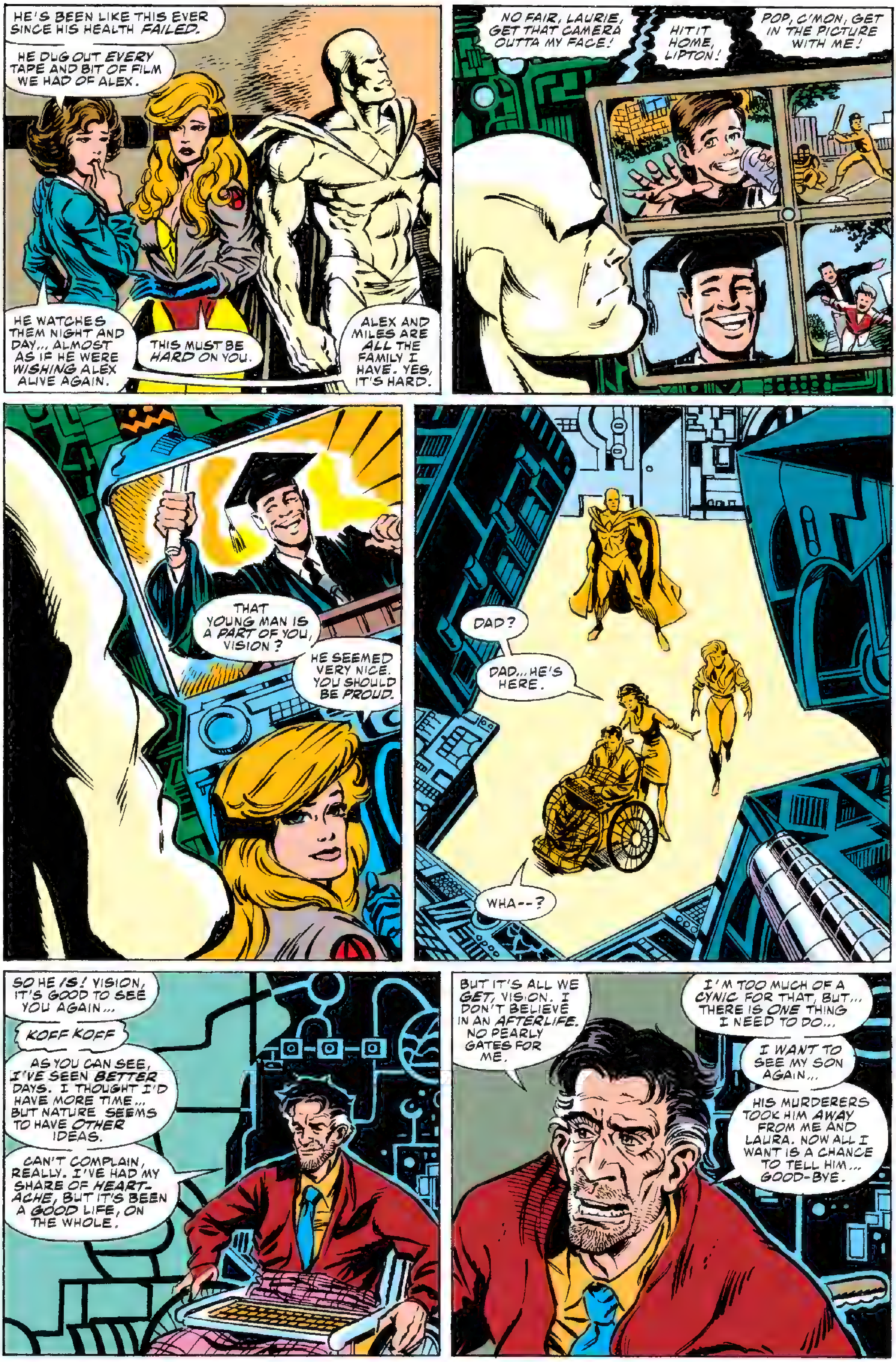

THE AVENGERS INFIRMARY.
HE SEEMS SO LONELY, CAROL.
WHAT CAN IT BE LIKE... TO HAVE BEEN FULLY HUMAN AT LONG LAST AND THEN HAVE IT ALL RIPPED AWAY?
I WONDER, CAN HE EVEN KNOW WHAT HE'S LOST?
I'M SORRY! I'VE BEEN RUDE.
HERE I AM GOING ON ABOUT THE VISION, AND I HAVEN'T EVEN ASKED YOU HOW YOU'RE FEELING.*
*BINARY WAS WOUNDED IN QUASAR #34
I'M FINE, CRYSTAL. REALLY --DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
I'M JUST SURPRISED TO FIND THE VISION AND I HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON.
SINCE THE X-MAN ROGUE STOLE MY POWERS AND PERSONA, I'VE HAD NO EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH MY PAST.
I REMEMBER MY MOTHER AND FATHER... MY CHILDHOOD FRIENDS... BUT NONE OF THE JOY, NONE OF THE LOVE.
MY MEMORIES ARE EMPTY ONES, CRYSTAL, AND IT IS A LOSS I'LL NEVER GET OVER.
I-I DIDN'T KNOW.
I FEEL LIKE A FOOL FOR BRINGING THIS ALL UP.
NONSENSE.
NEVER DENIGRATE YOUR CONCERN FOR YOUR FRIENDS, CRYSTAL. IT IS QUITE SPECIAL.
NOW WHY DON'T YOU GO GET YOUR DAUGHTER AND BRING HER HERE FOR A VISIT?
SHE'S VERY SWEET, BLACK WIDOW. BUT DOES SHE HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN AVENGER?
CRYSTAL MAY NOT BE FROM THE COLD, TOUGH WORLD OF ESPIONAGE LIKE YOU AND I, CAROL...
...BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA AND I HAVE TOTAL FAITH IN HER.
WELL, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

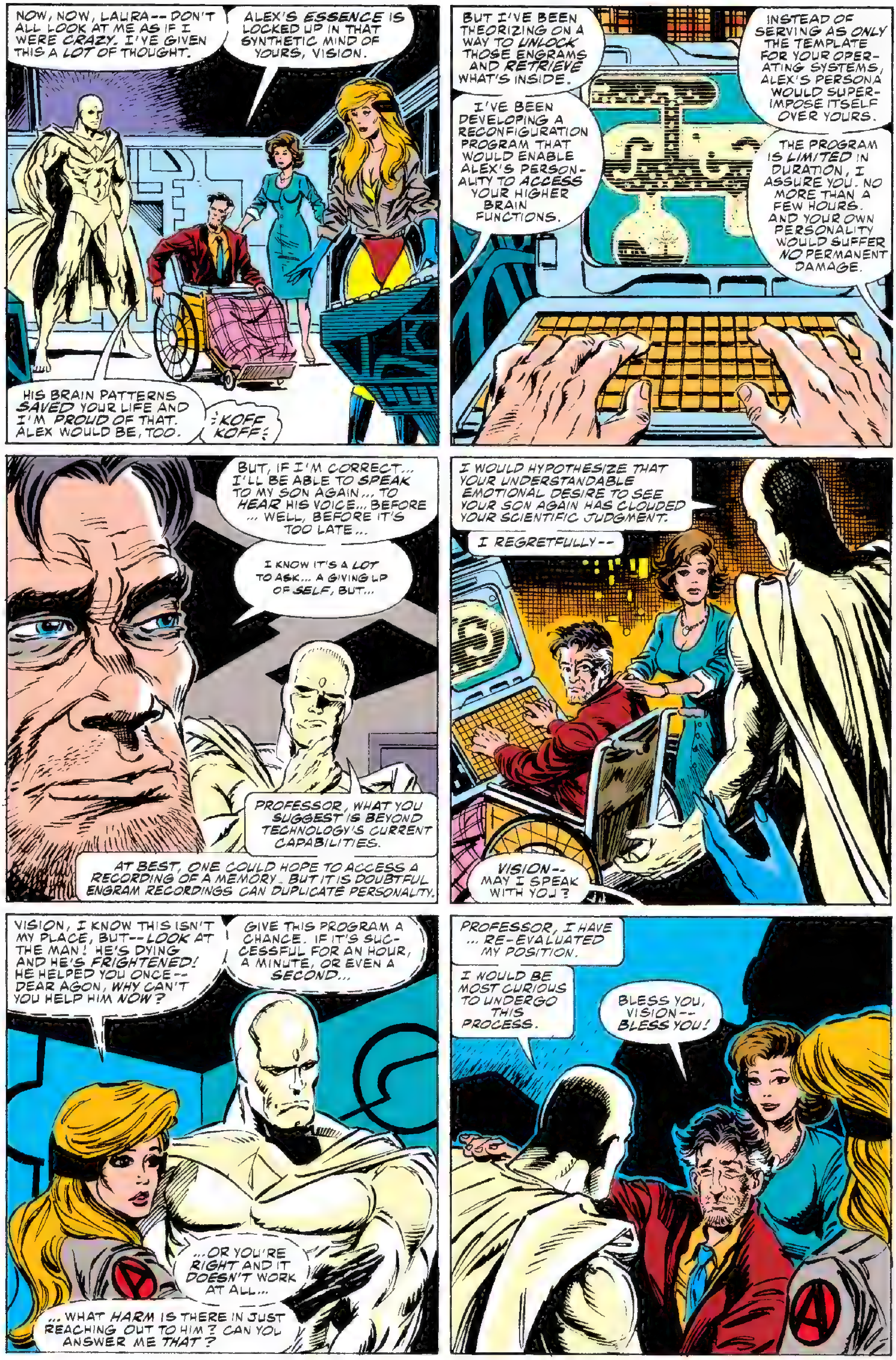

I FEAR YOU ARE MISINFORMED, MRS. LIPTON.
IN POINT OF FACT, ALTHOUGH MY MIND HAS BEEN PROGRAMMED UTILIZING ENGRAMS BASED ON RECORDINGS OF YOUR LATE HUSBAND'S BRAIN PATTERNS...
...I AM NOT HE. I ASSURE YOU, MY PERSONA IS QUITE DIFFERENT.
O-OF COURSE.
I'M SORRY... I ONLY LEARNED ALL THIS RECENTLY, YOU SEE.
IT WAS A LOT TO TAKE IN. ABOUT YOU... ABOUT *ALEX* BEING A *PART* OF YOU.
I ASSUME YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW INFORMED YOU. IS PROFESSOR LIPTON WELL?
NO, HE *ISN'T*, VISION.
MILES... MILES IS *DYING*, YOU SEE.
CANCER.
THAT'S WHY I'VE COME. IT'S VERY *IMPORTANT* TO HIM THAT YOU SEE HIM *TONIGHT*.
THAT IS *IMPOSSIBLE*.
CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS TAKEN A LEAVE OF ABSENCE. THERE ARE CERTAIN DUTIES I MUST ATTEND TO IN HIS PLACE. MY RESPONSIBILITY AS AN AVENGER TAKES PRECEDENCE...
MRS. LIPTON...?
MR.... VISION... I'M SORRY. I TOLD MYSELF I *WOULDN'T* LOSE CONTROL.
BUT THIS LAST YEAR HAS BEEN VERY DIFFICULT... LOSING ALEX, AND NOW MILES...
HE'S SO *FRAIL* AND IN *SO* MUCH PAIN IT BREAKS MY HEART. ALL HE WANTS IS JUST TO SEE YOU...!
HE SAVED *YOUR LIFE*... IS THAT REALLY *TOO* MUCH TO ASK?

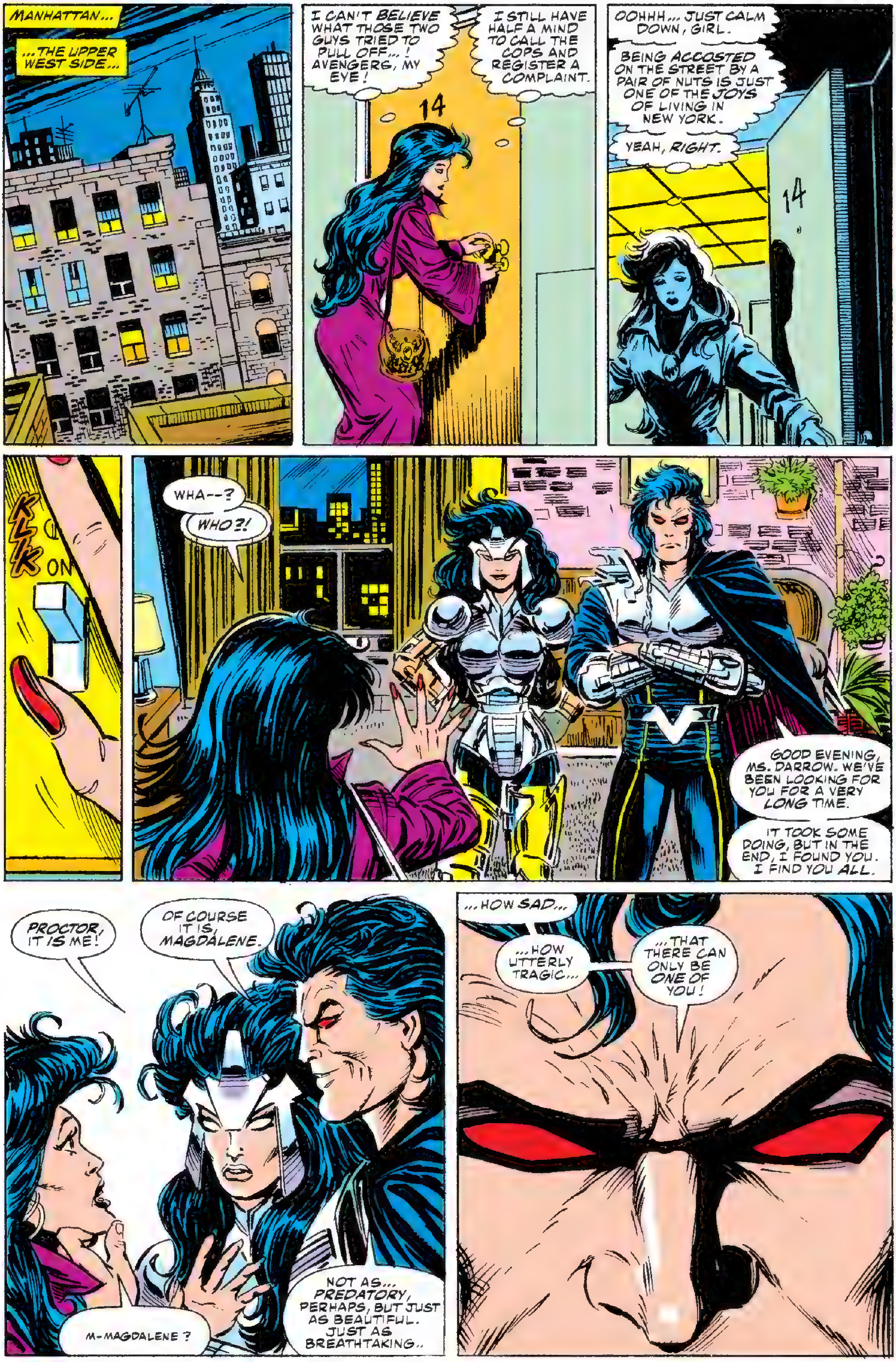

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR 'RESPONSIBILITY' AS AN AVENGER... MAYBE THE DRUDGERY OF EVERYDAY LIFE DOESN'T SEEM IMPORTANT TO 'HEROES' LIKE YOU...
...BUT, BELIEVE ME, WHEN YOU SEE SOMEONE YOU LOVE IN PAIN, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS?
I DO NOT MEAN TO BE COLD, MRS. LIPTON...
...BUT I AM AFRAID I DO NOT.
EXCUSE ME... I DIDN'T MEAN TO EAVESDROP...
CRYSTAL?
...BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GO, VISION. THERE ARE THINGS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONITORING DUTY...
...YOU KNEW THAT ONCE. YOU'VE GOT TO GO BECAUSE IT'S THE HUMAN THING TO DO.
CROSSTOWN...
HERC, BUDDY-- CALM DOWN!
HOW CANST THOU SAY SUCH A THING, GOOD KNIGHT?
FOR WE ARE IN GRAVE DANGER!
HAST THOU FORGOTTEN HOW MAGDALENE AND THE SWORDSMAN DIDST AMBUSH OUR FELLOWSHIP LIKE COWARDLY BLACKGUARDS?*
*SEE AVENGERS #344-- RALF.
Golden's
BAR
SHE ESCAPED OUR RIGHTEOUS ANGER THAT TIME!
BY THE SACRED MOUNT OF OLYMPUS...
WET SPOT
...IT SHALL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN!

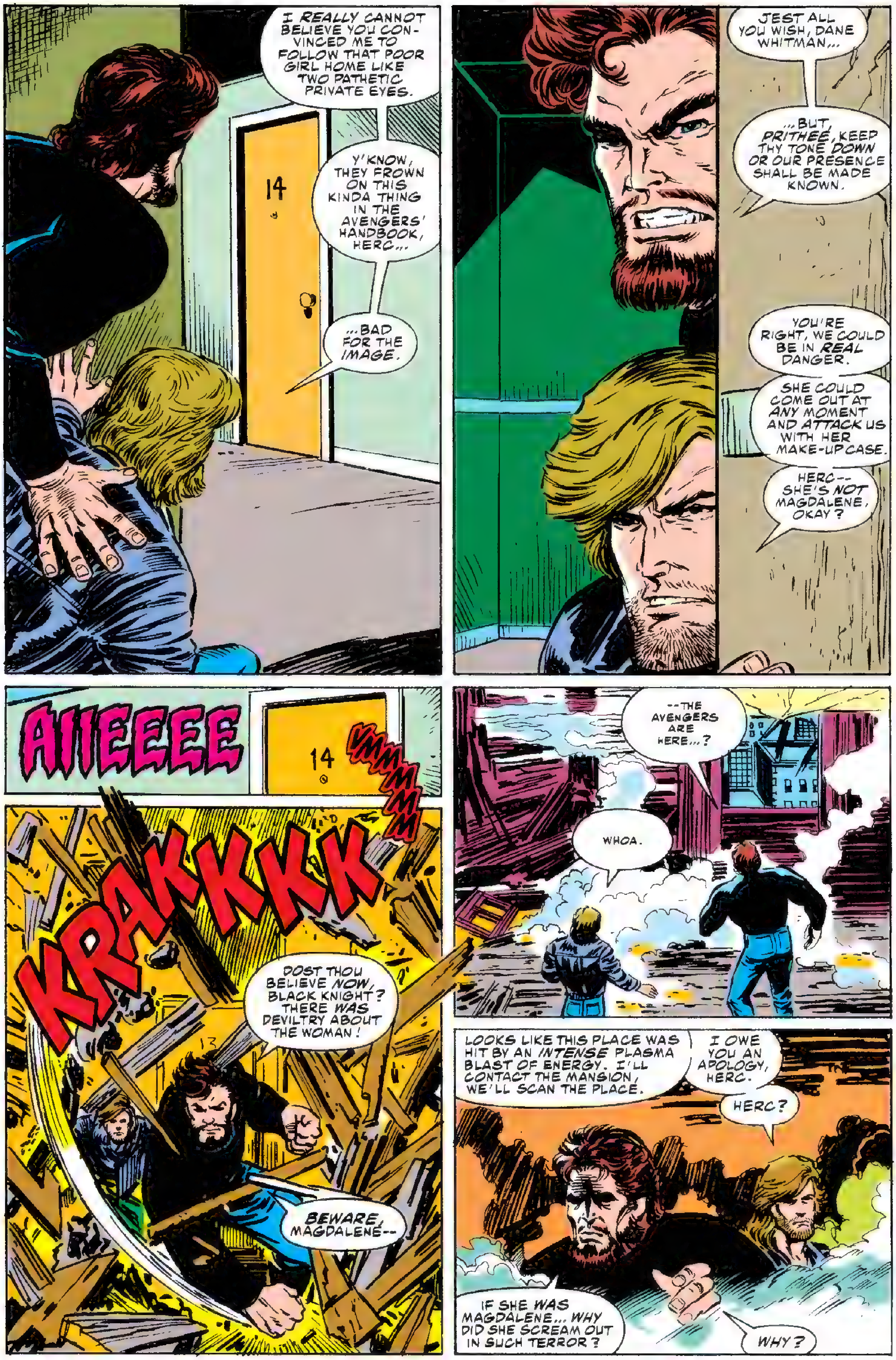

I SAY THEE *HALT*, MAGDALENE!
THY CHANGE OF GARB MAY FOOL *OTHERS*, BUT I KNOW THEE FOR THE WITCH THOU ART!
DIDST THOU THINK YOU WOULD *ESCAPE* MY WRATH?
ARE YOU *NUTS?*
THE NAME'S *MARISSA DARROW*, MY MUSCLEBOUND FRIEND...
...AND IF YOU'VE MIXED ME UP FOR SOME BIMBO WHO'S DUMPED YOU, THEN I'M SORRY BECAUSE YOU'RE *CERTAINLY* NOT MY TYPE!
AND IF YOU *CONTINUE* TO FOLLOW ME, I SWEAR I'LL SUE YOU FOR HARASSMENT!
DO I MAKE MYSELF *CLEAR?*
PERFECTLY, MS. DARROW. REALLY. WE UNDERSTAND, *DON'T* WE, HERC?
I WANT TO *APOLOGIZE* FOR MY FRIEND, BUT WE'RE AVENGERS, Y'SEE...
...BELIEVE IT OR NOT...
...AND YOU LOOK *AWFULLY* LIKE A SUPER-VILLAIN WE RECENTLY FOUGHT...
...AND IT KINDA THREW MY BUDDY FOR A LOOP...
...AND...?
AVENGERS?
NOW I'VE HEARD EVERYTHING.
GOOD NIGHT, GENTLEMEN.
DON'T *EVER* DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT AGAIN, OKAY?
MY SUSPICIONS HAVE NOT BEEN *ALLAYED*.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE *EASY* ABOUT THIS, ARE YOU?

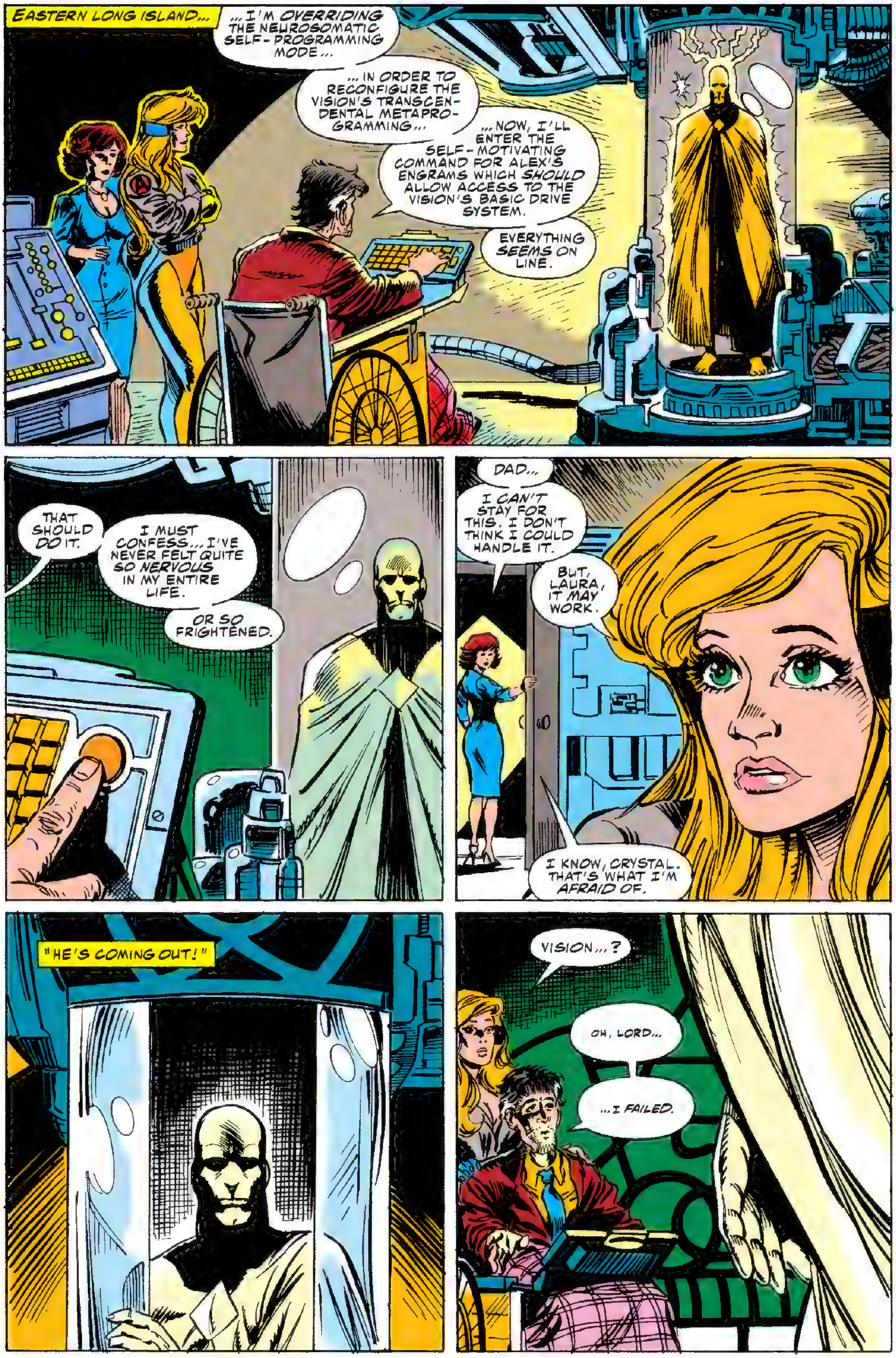

SOME TIME LATER...
...ON THE EASTERN TIP OF LONG ISLAND...
VRRMMM
CRYSTAL, YOU HAVE CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION THAT I AM OBLIGATED TO VISIT PROFESSOR LIPTON MOST ADEQUATELY.
BUT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR YOU TO ACCOMPANY ME.
NATASHA FELT THAT IT WAS BEST I COME ALONG. AND YOU WOULDN'T QUESTION OUR ACTING CHAIRMAN, WOULD YOU?
THIS IS A LOVELY HOUSE, LAURA.
THANK YOU.
ALEX AND I LIVED HERE. HE LOVED THE OCEAN.
SOME MORNINGS I'D FIND HIM ON THE BEACH, WATCHING THE SUN COME UP...
...HE'D BE FILLED WITH SUCH JOY...
...AND SO MANY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE...
IT USED TO MAKE ME LAUGH. I'D TELL HIM TO SLOW DOWN, WE'D HAVE TIME FOR IT ALL.
OF COURSE, I WAS WRONG.
PROFESSOR LIPTON LIVES HERE WITH YOU NOW?
YES...
THROUGH HERE...
...IN HIS LAB.
HEY, POPS!
THROW THE BALL THIS WAY!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ALEX!

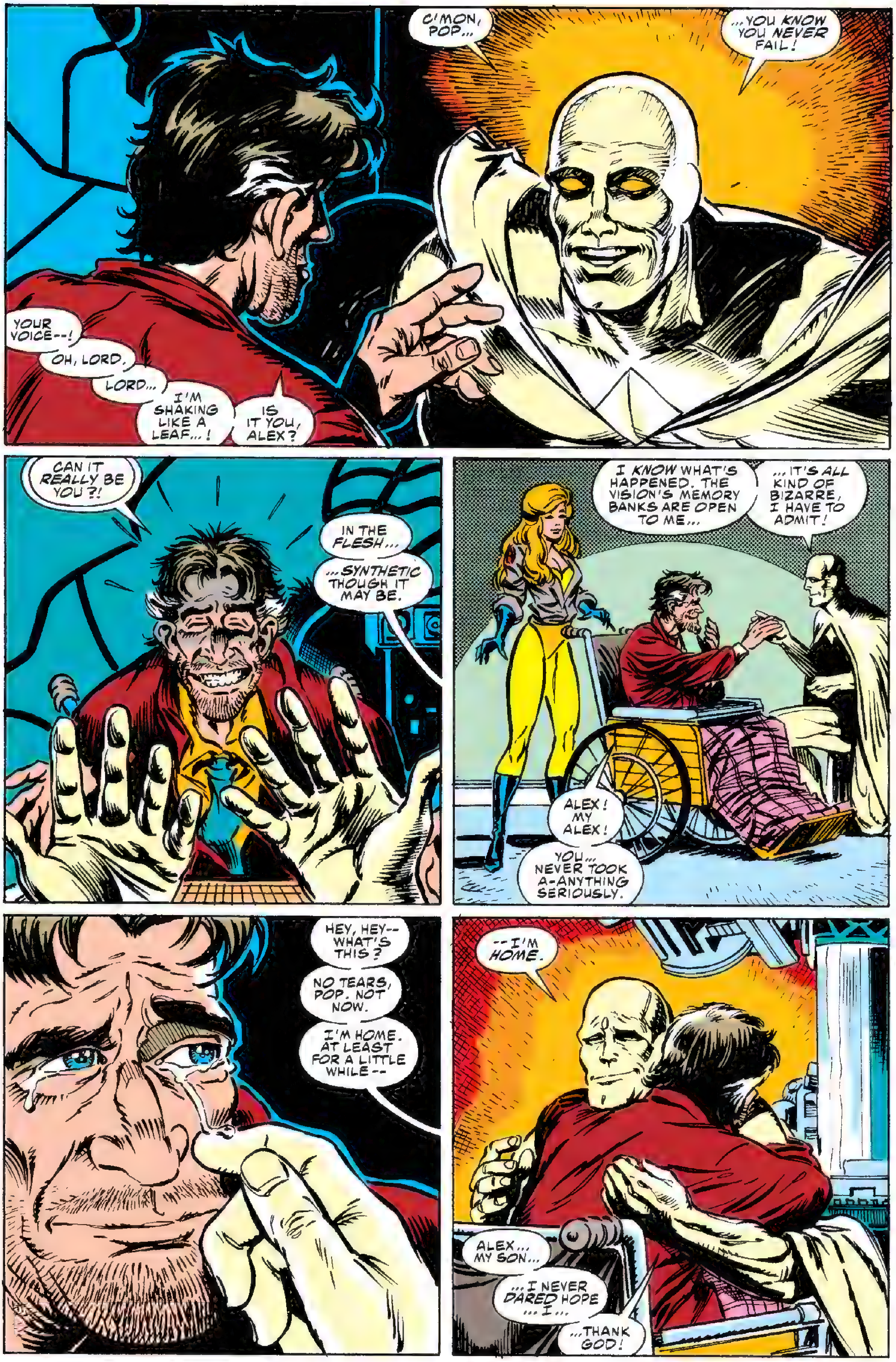

HE'S BEEN LIKE THIS EVER SINCE HIS HEALTH *FAILED.*
HE DUG OUT *EVERY* TAPE AND BIT OF FILM WE HAD OF ALEX.
HE WATCHES THEM NIGHT AND DAY... ALMOST AS IF HE WERE *WISHING* ALEX ALIVE AGAIN.
THIS MUST BE *HARD* ON YOU.
ALEX AND MILES ARE *ALL* THE FAMILY I HAVE. YES, IT'S HARD.
NO FAIR, LAURIE, GET THAT CAMERA OUTTA MY FACE!
HIT IT HOME, LIPTON!
POP, C'MON, GET IN THE PICTURE WITH ME!
THAT YOUNG MAN IS A *PART OF YOU,* VISION?
HE SEEMED VERY NICE. YOU SHOULD BE *PROUD.*
DAD?
DAD... HE'S HERE.
WHA--?
SO HE *IS!* VISION, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN...
KOFF KOFF
AS YOU CAN SEE, I'VE SEEN *BETTER* DAYS. I THOUGHT I'D HAVE MORE TIME... BUT NATURE SEEMS TO HAVE *OTHER* IDEAS.
CAN'T COMPLAIN, REALLY. I'VE HAD MY SHARE OF *HEARTACHE,* BUT IT'S BEEN A *GOOD* LIFE, ON THE WHOLE.
BUT IT'S ALL WE *GET,* VISION. I DON'T BELIEVE IN AN *AFTERLIFE.* NO PEARLY GATES FOR ME.
I'M TOO MUCH OF A *CYNIC* FOR THAT, BUT... THERE IS *ONE* THING I NEED TO DO...
I WANT TO SEE MY SON AGAIN...
HIS MURDERERS TOOK HIM *AWAY* FROM ME AND LAURA. NOW ALL I WANT IS A CHANCE TO TELL HIM... GOOD-BYE.

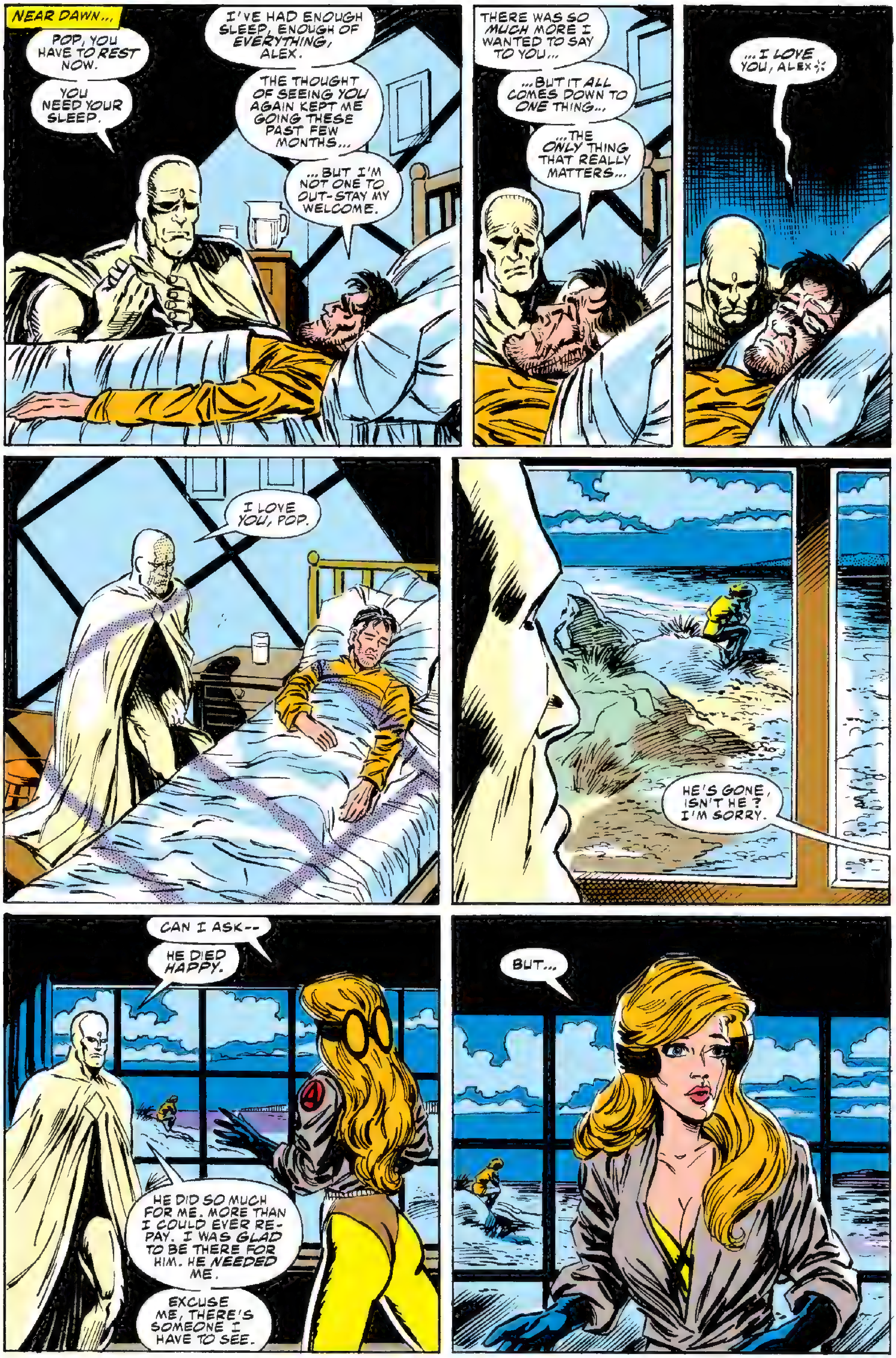

NOW, NOW, LAURA-- DON'T ALL LOOK AT ME AS IF I WERE CRAZY. I'VE GIVEN THIS A LOT OF THOUGHT.
ALEX'S ESSENCE IS LOCKED UP IN THAT SYNTHETIC MIND OF YOURS, VISION.
HIS BRAIN PATTERNS SAVED YOUR LIFE AND I'M PROUD OF THAT. ALEX WOULD BE, TOO.
KOFF KOFF
BUT I'VE BEEN THEORIZING ON A WAY TO UNLOCK THOSE ENGRAMS AND RETRIEVE WHAT'S INSIDE.
I'VE BEEN DEVELOPING A RECONFIGURATION PROGRAM THAT WOULD ENABLE ALEX'S PERSONALITY TO ACCESS YOUR HIGHER BRAIN FUNCTIONS.
INSTEAD OF SERVING AS ONLY THE TEMPLATE FOR YOUR OPERATING SYSTEMS, ALEX'S PERSONA WOULD SUPERIMPOSE ITSELF OVER YOURS.
THE PROGRAM IS LIMITED IN DURATION, I ASSURE YOU. NO MORE THAN A FEW HOURS. AND YOUR OWN PERSONALITY WOULD SUFFER NO PERMANENT DAMAGE.
BUT, IF I'M CORRECT... I'LL BE ABLE TO SPEAK TO MY SON AGAIN... TO HEAR HIS VOICE... BEFORE ... WELL, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE...
I KNOW IT'S A LOT TO ASK... A GIVING UP OF SELF, BUT...
PROFESSOR, WHAT YOU SUGGEST IS BEYOND TECHNOLOGY'S CURRENT CAPABILITIES.
AT BEST, ONE COULD HOPE TO ACCESS A RECORDING OF A MEMORY. BUT IT IS DOUBTFUL ENGRAM RECORDINGS CAN DUPLICATE PERSONALITY.
I WOULD HYPOTHESIZE THAT YOUR UNDERSTANDABLE EMOTIONAL DESIRE TO SEE YOUR SON AGAIN HAS CLOUDED YOUR SCIENTIFIC JUDGMENT.
I REGRETFULLY--
VISION-- MAY I SPEAK WITH YOU?
VISION, I KNOW THIS ISN'T MY PLACE, BUT-- LOOK AT THE MAN! HE'S DYING AND HE'S FRIGHTENED! HE HELPED YOU ONCE-- DEAR AGON, WHY CAN'T YOU HELP HIM NOW?
GIVE THIS PROGRAM A CHANCE. IF IT'S SUCCESSFUL FOR AN HOUR, A MINUTE, OR EVEN A SECOND...
...OR YOU'RE RIGHT AND IT DOESN'T WORK AT ALL...
...WHAT HARM IS THERE IN JUST REACHING OUT TO HIM? CAN YOU ANSWER ME THAT?
PROFESSOR, I HAVE ... RE-EVALUATED MY POSITION.
I WOULD BE MOST CURIOUS TO UNDERGO THIS PROCESS.
BLESS YOU, VISION-- BLESS YOU!

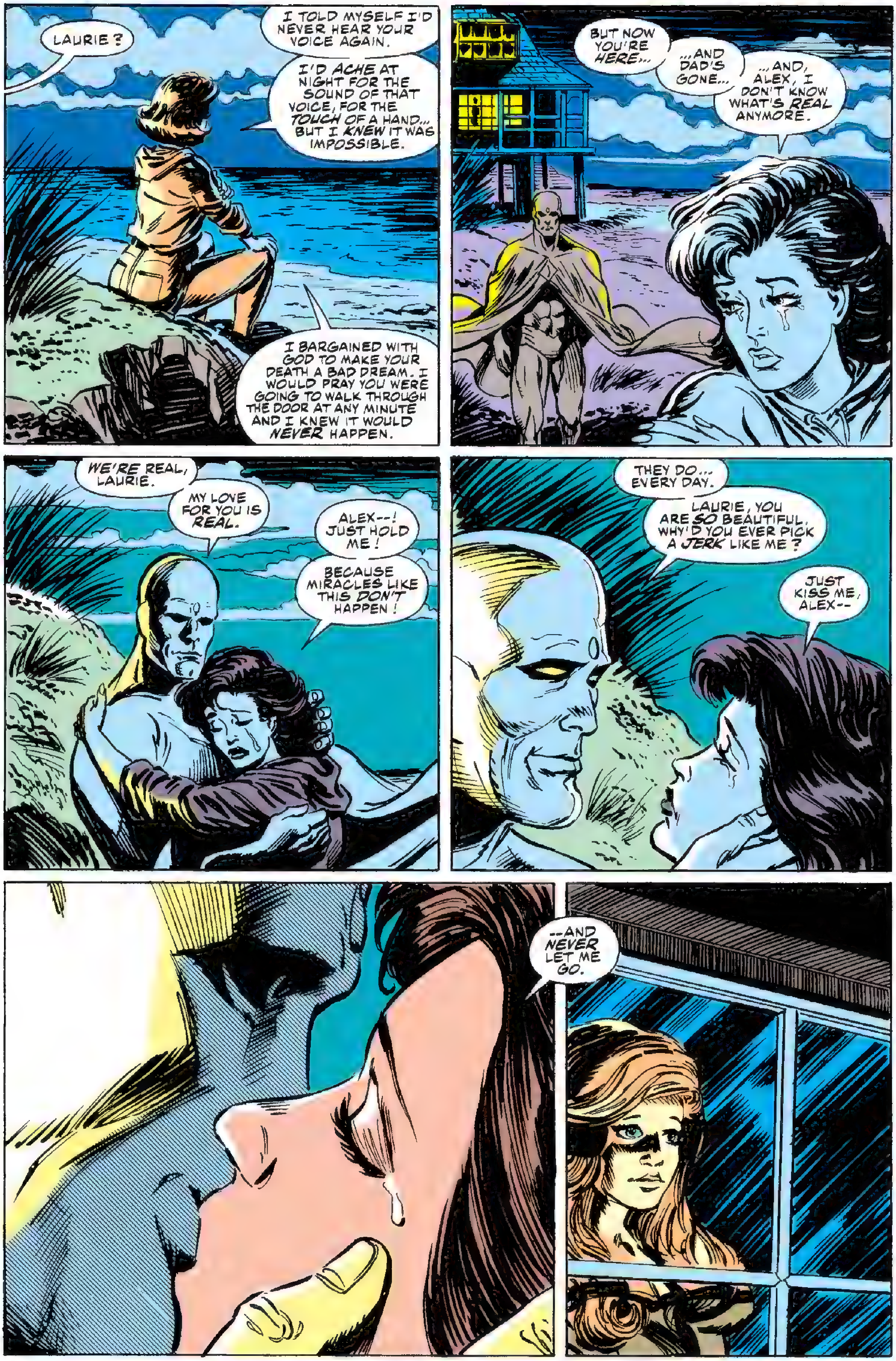

MANHATTAN...
...THE UPPER WEST SIDE...
I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT THOSE TWO GUYS TRIED TO PULL OFF...! AVENGERS, MY EYE!
I STILL HAVE HALF A MIND TO CALL THE COPS AND REGISTER A COMPLAINT.
14
OOHHH... JUST CALM DOWN, GIRL.
BEING ACCOSTED ON THE STREET BY A PAIR OF NUTS IS JUST ONE OF THE JOYS OF LIVING IN NEW YORK.
YEAH, RIGHT.
14
KLIK
ON
WHA--?
WHO?!
GOOD EVENING, MS. DARROW. WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU FOR A VERY LONG TIME.
IT TOOK SOME DOING, BUT IN THE END, I FOUND YOU. I FIND YOU ALL.
PROCTOR, IT IS ME!
OF COURSE IT IS, MAGDALENE.
M-MAGDALENE?
NOT AS... PREDATORY, PERHAPS, BUT JUST AS BEAUTIFUL. JUST AS BREATHTAKING..
...HOW SAD...
...HOW UTTERLY TRAGIC...
...THAT THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE OF YOU!

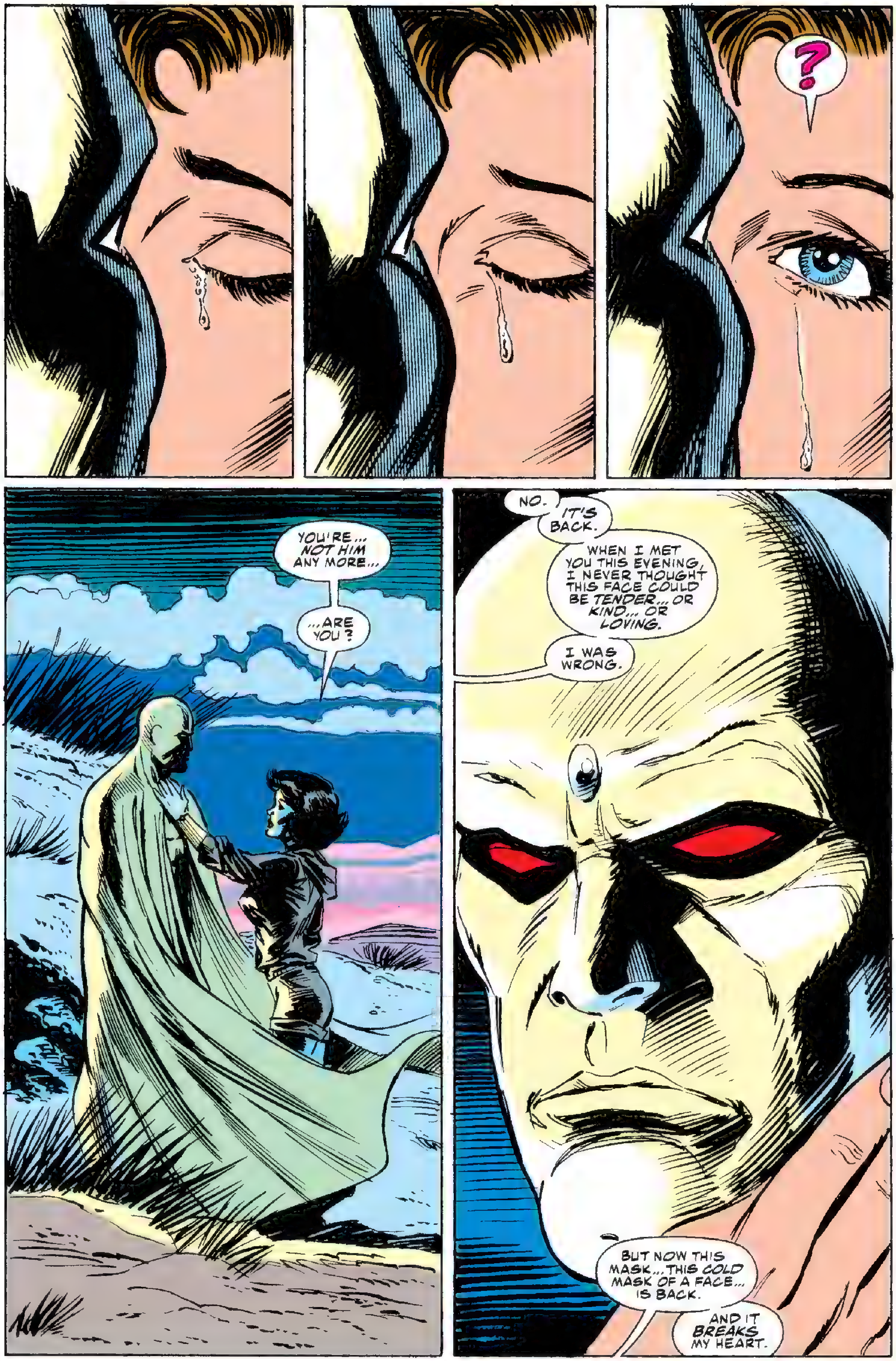

I *REALLY* CANNOT BELIEVE YOU CONVINCED ME TO FOLLOW THAT POOR GIRL HOME LIKE TWO PATHETIC PRIVATE EYES.
Y'KNOW, THEY FROWN ON THIS KINDA THING IN THE AVENGERS' HANDBOOK, HERC...
...BAD FOR THE *IMAGE*.
14
JEST ALL YOU WISH, DANE WHITMAN...
...BUT, *PRITHEE*, KEEP THY TONE *DOWN* OR OUR PRESENCE SHALL BE MADE KNOWN.
YOU'RE RIGHT, WE COULD BE IN *REAL* DANGER.
SHE COULD COME OUT AT *ANY* MOMENT AND *ATTACK* US WITH HER MAKE-UP CASE.
HERC-- SHE'S *NOT* MAGDALENE, OKAY?
AIIEEEE
14
VMMMMMM
KRAKKKK
DOST THOU BELIEVE *NOW*, BLACK KNIGHT? THERE *WAS* DEVILTRY ABOUT THE WOMAN!
BEWARE, MAGDALENE--
--THE AVENGERS ARE HERE...?
WHOA.
LOOKS LIKE THIS PLACE WAS HIT BY AN *INTENSE* PLASMA BLAST OF ENERGY. I'LL CONTACT THE MANSION, WE'LL SCAN THE PLACE.
I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY, HERC.
HERC?
IF SHE *WAS* MAGDALENE... WHY DID SHE SCREAM OUT IN SUCH TERROR?
WHY?

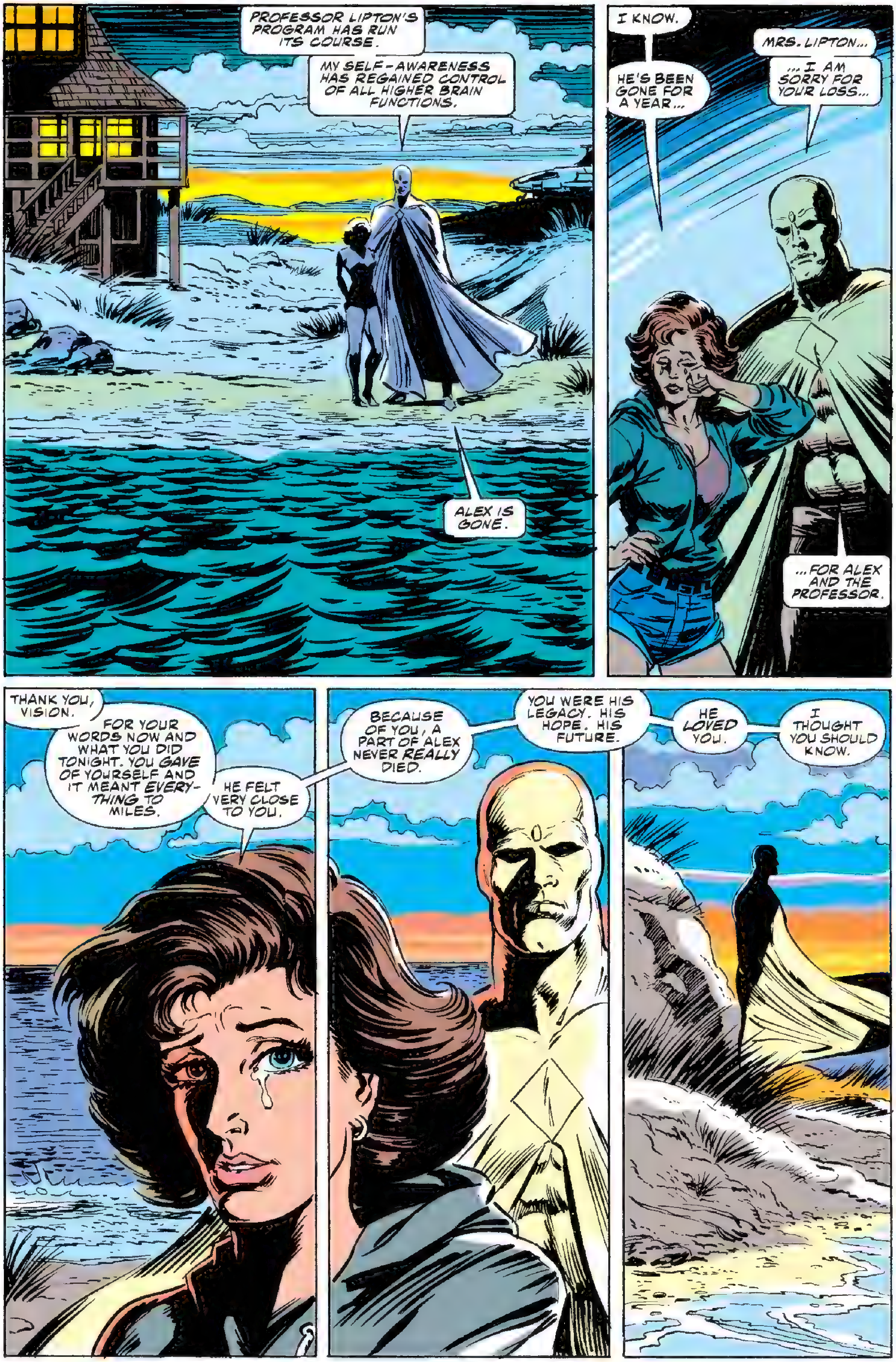

EASTERN LONG ISLAND...
...I'M OVERRIDING THE NEUROSOMATIC SELF-PROGRAMMING MODE...
...IN ORDER TO RECONFIGURE THE VISION'S TRANSCENDENTAL METAPROGRAMMING...
...NOW, I'LL ENTER THE SELF-MOTIVATING COMMAND FOR ALEX'S ENGRAMS WHICH SHOULD ALLOW ACCESS TO THE VISION'S BASIC DRIVE SYSTEM.
EVERYTHING SEEMS ON LINE.
THAT SHOULD DO IT.
I MUST CONFESS... I'VE NEVER FELT QUITE SO NERVOUS IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.
OR SO FRIGHTENED.
DAD...
I CAN'T STAY FOR THIS. I DON'T THINK I COULD HANDLE IT.
BUT, LAURA, IT MAY WORK.
I KNOW, CRYSTAL. THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF.
"HE'S COMING OUT!"
VISION...?
OH, LORD...
...I FAILED.

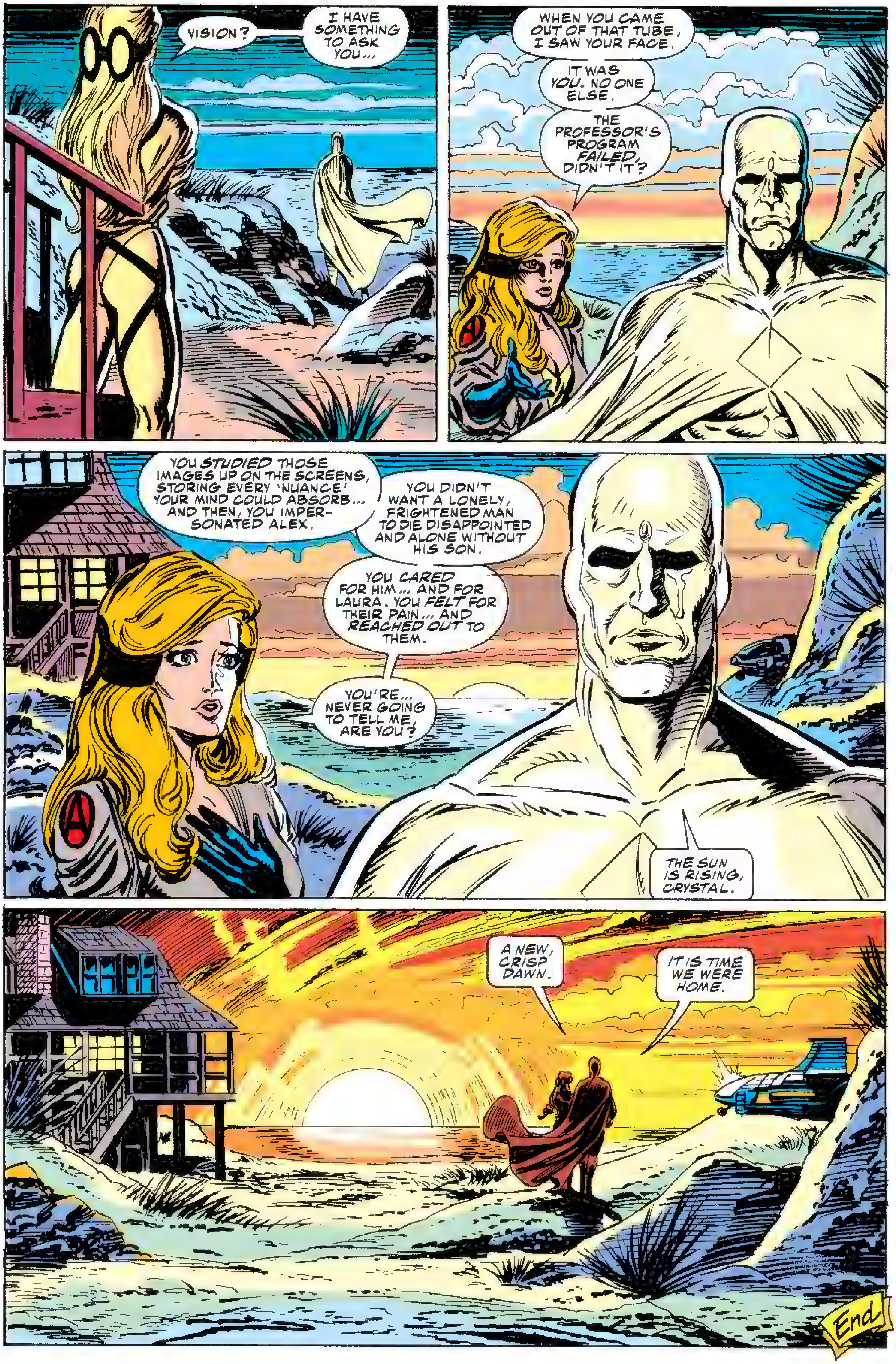

C'MON, POP...
...YOU KNOW YOU NEVER FAIL!
YOUR VOICE--!
OH, LORD.
LORD...
I'M SHAKING LIKE A LEAF...!
IS IT YOU, ALEX?
CAN IT REALLY BE YOU?!
IN THE FLESH...
...SYNTHETIC THOUGH IT MAY BE.
I KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED. THE VISION'S MEMORY BANKS ARE OPEN TO ME...
...IT'S ALL KIND OF BIZARRE, I HAVE TO ADMIT!
ALEX! MY ALEX!
YOU... NEVER TOOK A-ANYTHING SERIOUSLY.
HEY, HEY-- WHAT'S THIS?
NO TEARS, POP. NOT NOW.
I'M HOME. AT LEAST FOR A LITTLE WHILE--
--I'M HOME.
ALEX... MY SON...
...I NEVER DARED HOPE ... I...
...THANK GOD!


NEAR DAWN...
POP, YOU HAVE TO REST NOW.
YOU NEED YOUR SLEEP.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH SLEEP, ENOUGH OF EVERYTHING, ALEX.
THE THOUGHT OF SEEING YOU AGAIN KEPT ME GOING THESE PAST FEW MONTHS...
...BUT I'M NOT ONE TO OUT-STAY MY WELCOME.
THERE WAS SO MUCH MORE I WANTED TO SAY TO YOU...
...BUT IT ALL COMES DOWN TO ONE THING...
...THE ONLY THING THAT REALLY MATTERS...
...I LOVE YOU, ALEX.
I LOVE YOU, POP.
HE'S GONE, ISN'T HE? I'M SORRY.
CAN I ASK--
HE DIED HAPPY.
HE DID SO MUCH FOR ME. MORE THAN I COULD EVER REPAY. I WAS GLAD TO BE THERE FOR HIM. HE NEEDED ME.
EXCUSE ME, THERE'S SOMEONE I HAVE TO SEE.
BUT...


LAURIE?
I TOLD MYSELF I'D NEVER HEAR YOUR VOICE AGAIN.
I'D ACHE AT NIGHT FOR THE SOUND OF THAT VOICE, FOR THE TOUCH OF A HAND... BUT I KNEW IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.
I BARGAINED WITH GOD TO MAKE YOUR DEATH A BAD DREAM. I WOULD PRAY YOU WERE GOING TO WALK THROUGH THE DOOR AT ANY MINUTE AND I KNEW IT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN.
BUT NOW YOU'RE HERE...
...AND DAD'S GONE...
...AND, ALEX, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S REAL ANYMORE.
WE'RE REAL, LAURIE.
MY LOVE FOR YOU IS REAL.
ALEX--! JUST HOLD ME!
BECAUSE MIRACLES LIKE THIS DON'T HAPPEN!
THEY DO... EVERY DAY.
LAURIE, YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL. WHY'D YOU EVER PICK A JERK LIKE ME?
JUST KISS ME, ALEX--
--AND NEVER LET ME GO.

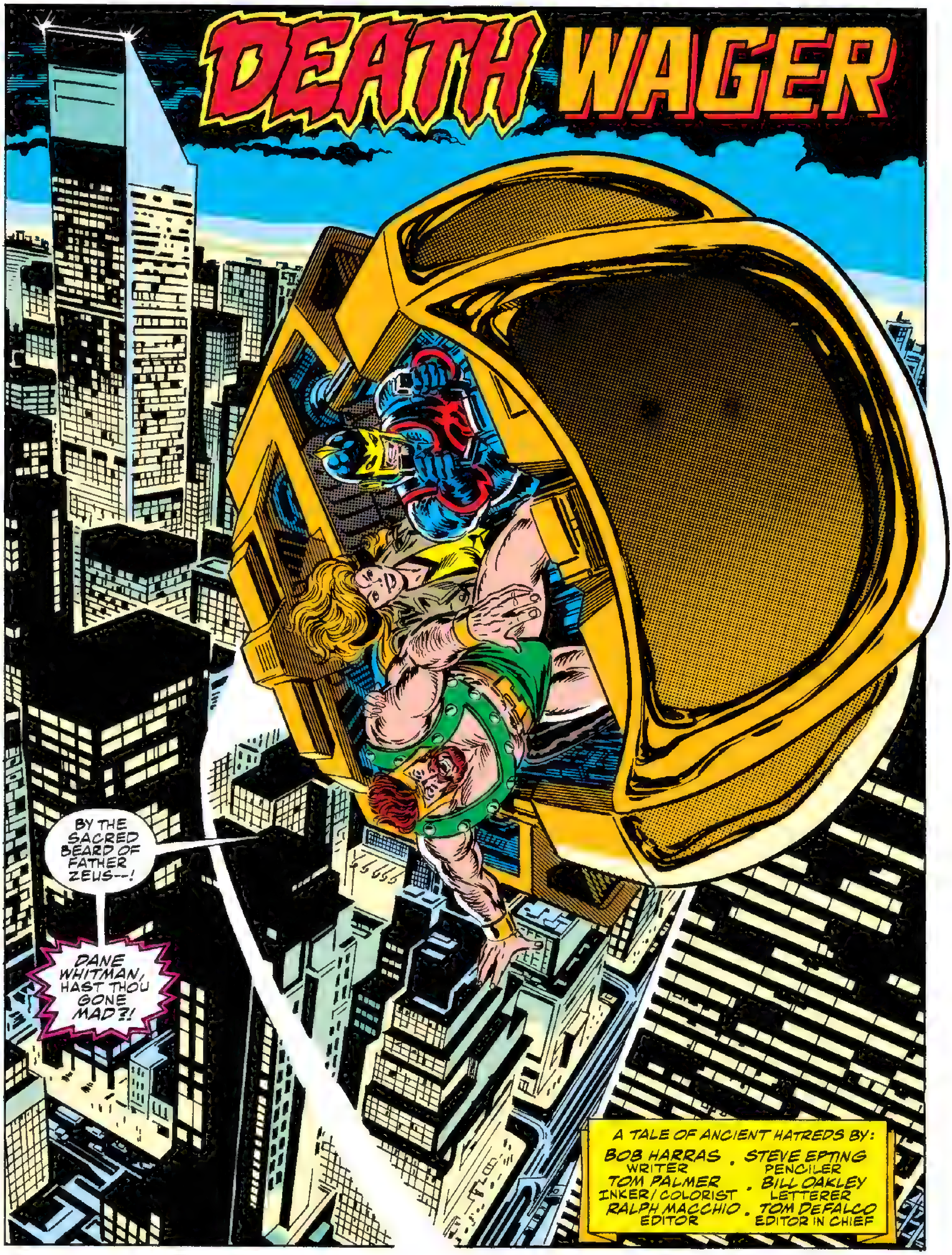

?
YOU'RE... *NOT HIM* ANY MORE...
...ARE YOU?
NO.
IT'S BACK.
WHEN I MET YOU THIS EVENING, I NEVER THOUGHT THIS FACE COULD BE *TENDER*... OR *KIND*... OR *LOVING*.
I WAS WRONG.
BUT NOW THIS MASK... THIS *COLD* MASK OF A FACE... IS BACK.
AND IT *BREAKS* MY HEART.

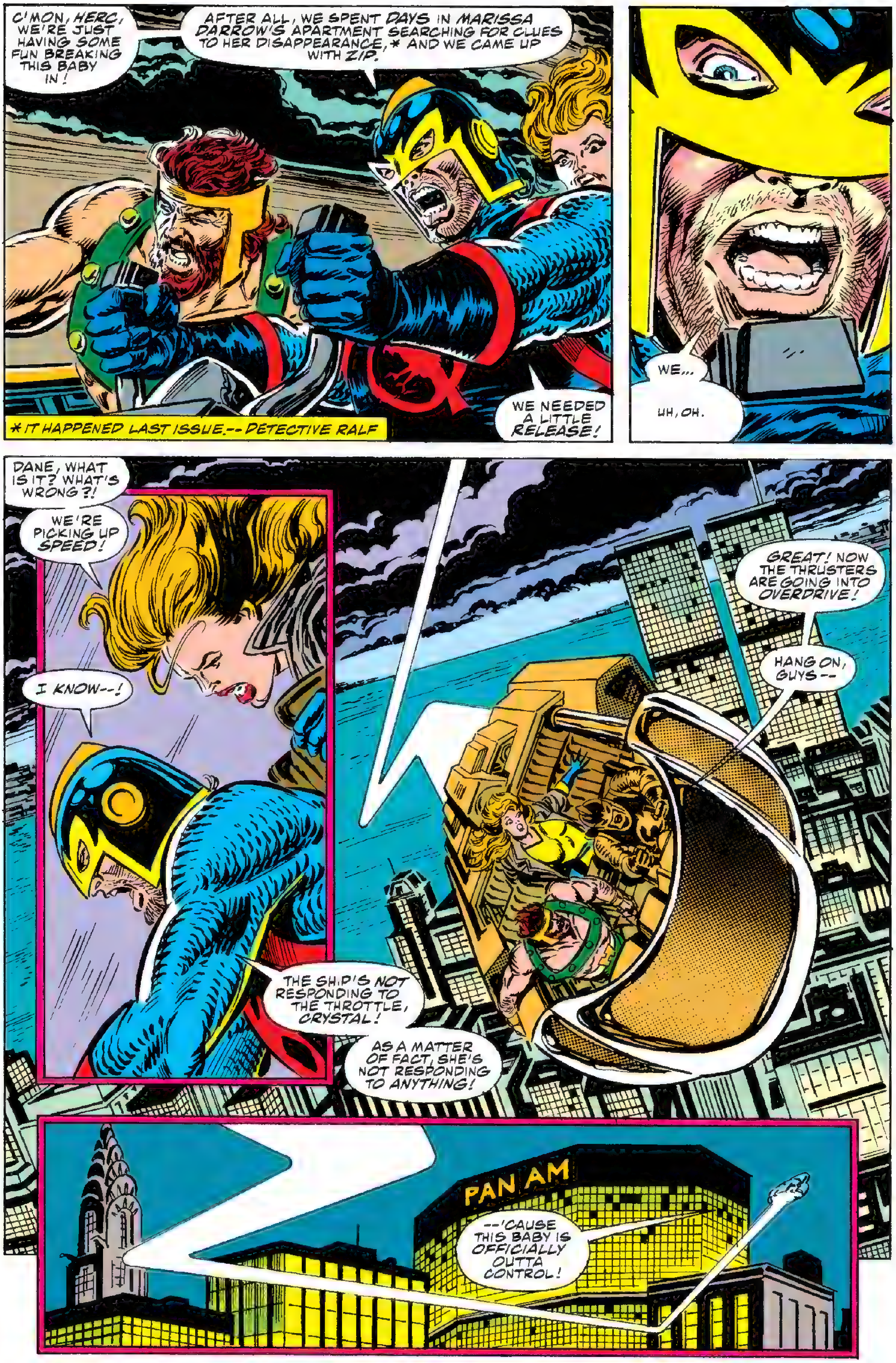

PROFESSOR LIPTON'S PROGRAM HAS RUN ITS COURSE.
MY SELF-AWARENESS HAS REGAINED CONTROL OF ALL HIGHER BRAIN FUNCTIONS.
ALEX IS GONE.
I KNOW.
HE'S BEEN GONE FOR A YEAR...
MRS. LIPTON...
...I AM SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS...
...FOR ALEX AND THE PROFESSOR.
THANK YOU, VISION.
FOR YOUR WORDS NOW AND WHAT YOU DID TONIGHT. YOU GAVE OF YOURSELF AND IT MEANT EVERYTHING TO MILES.
HE FELT VERY CLOSE TO YOU.
BECAUSE OF YOU, A PART OF ALEX NEVER REALLY DIED.
YOU WERE HIS LEGACY. HIS HOPE. HIS FUTURE.
HE LOVED YOU.
I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

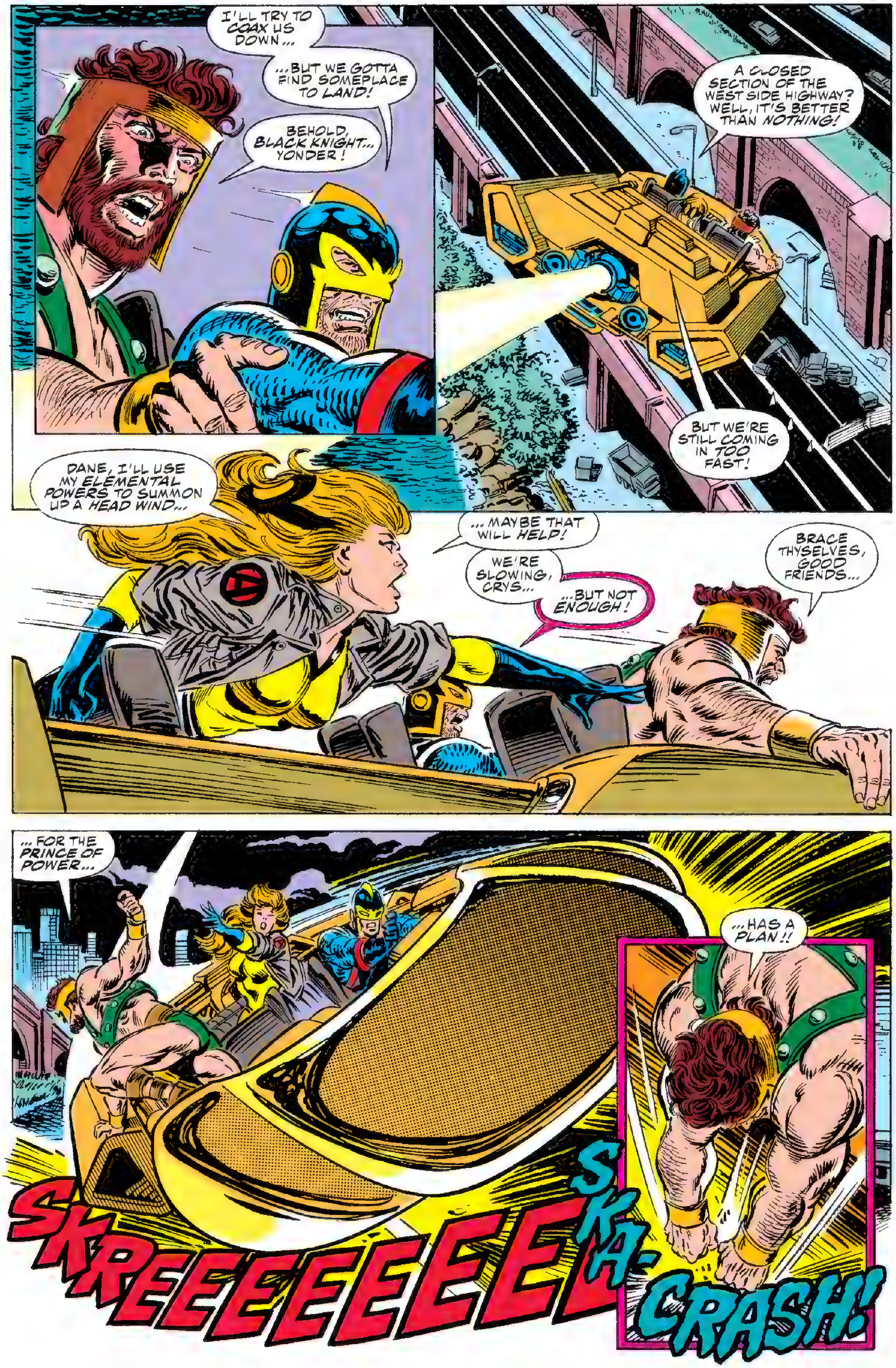

VISION?
I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK YOU...
WHEN YOU CAME OUT OF THAT TUBE, I SAW YOUR FACE.
IT WAS *YOU*. NO ONE ELSE.
THE PROFESSOR'S PROGRAM *FAILED*, DIDN'T IT?
YOU *STUDIED* THOSE IMAGES UP ON THE SCREENS, STORING EVERY 'NUANCE' YOUR MIND COULD ABSORB... AND THEN, YOU IMPERSONATED ALEX.
YOU DIDN'T WANT A LONELY, FRIGHTENED MAN TO DIE DISAPPOINTED AND ALONE WITHOUT HIS SON.
YOU *CARED* FOR HIM... AND FOR LAURA. YOU *FELT* FOR THEIR PAIN... AND *REACHED OUT* TO THEM.
YOU'RE... NEVER GOING TO TELL ME, ARE YOU?
THE SUN IS RISING, CRYSTAL.
A NEW, CRISP DAWN.
IT IS TIME WE WERE HOME.
End

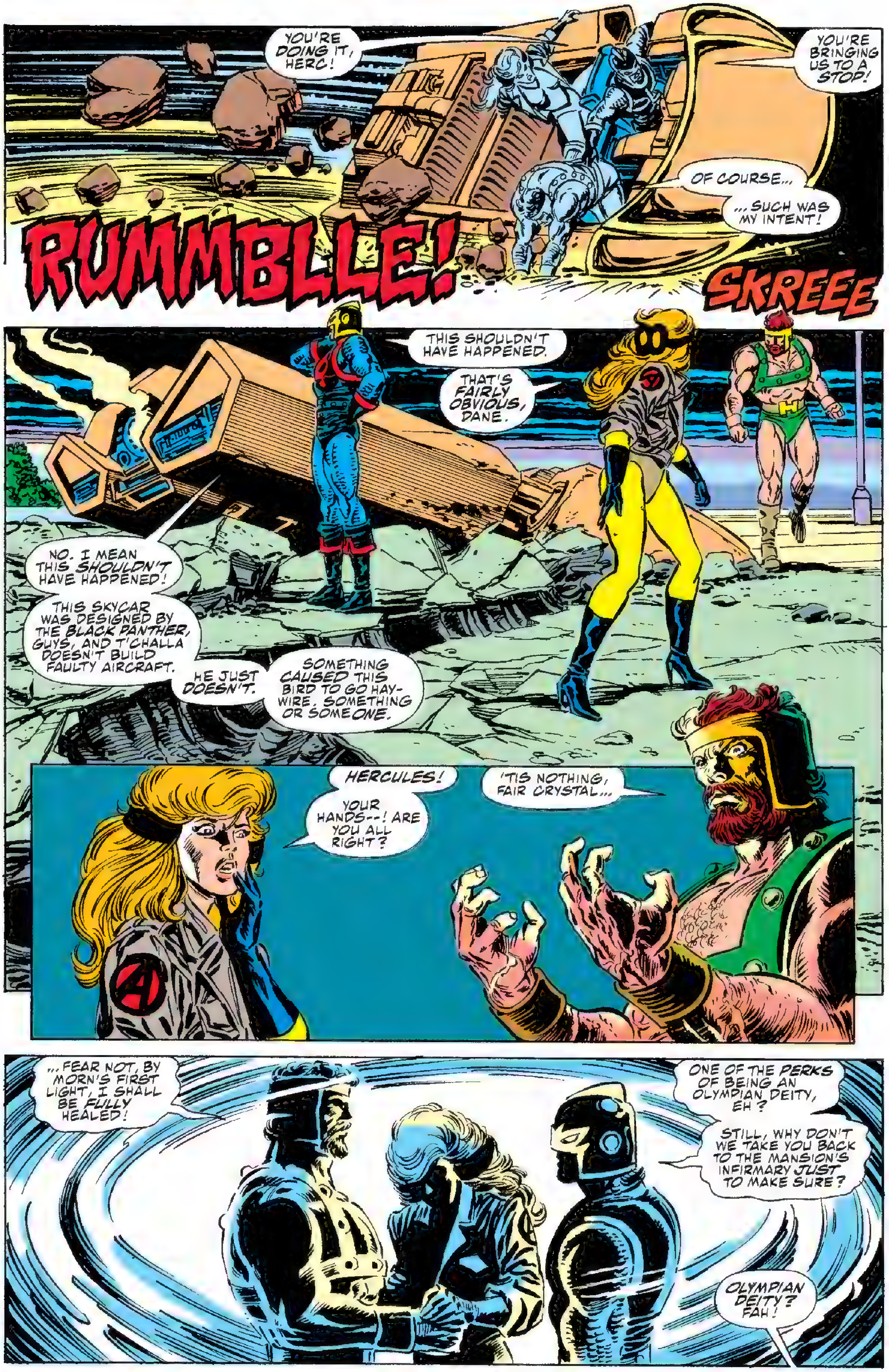
MARVEL COMICS
© 1992 MARVEL ENT. GRP. INC.
AVENGERS
A GOD GONE MAD!
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN/UK 70p
349
JULY
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
EPTING - PALMER

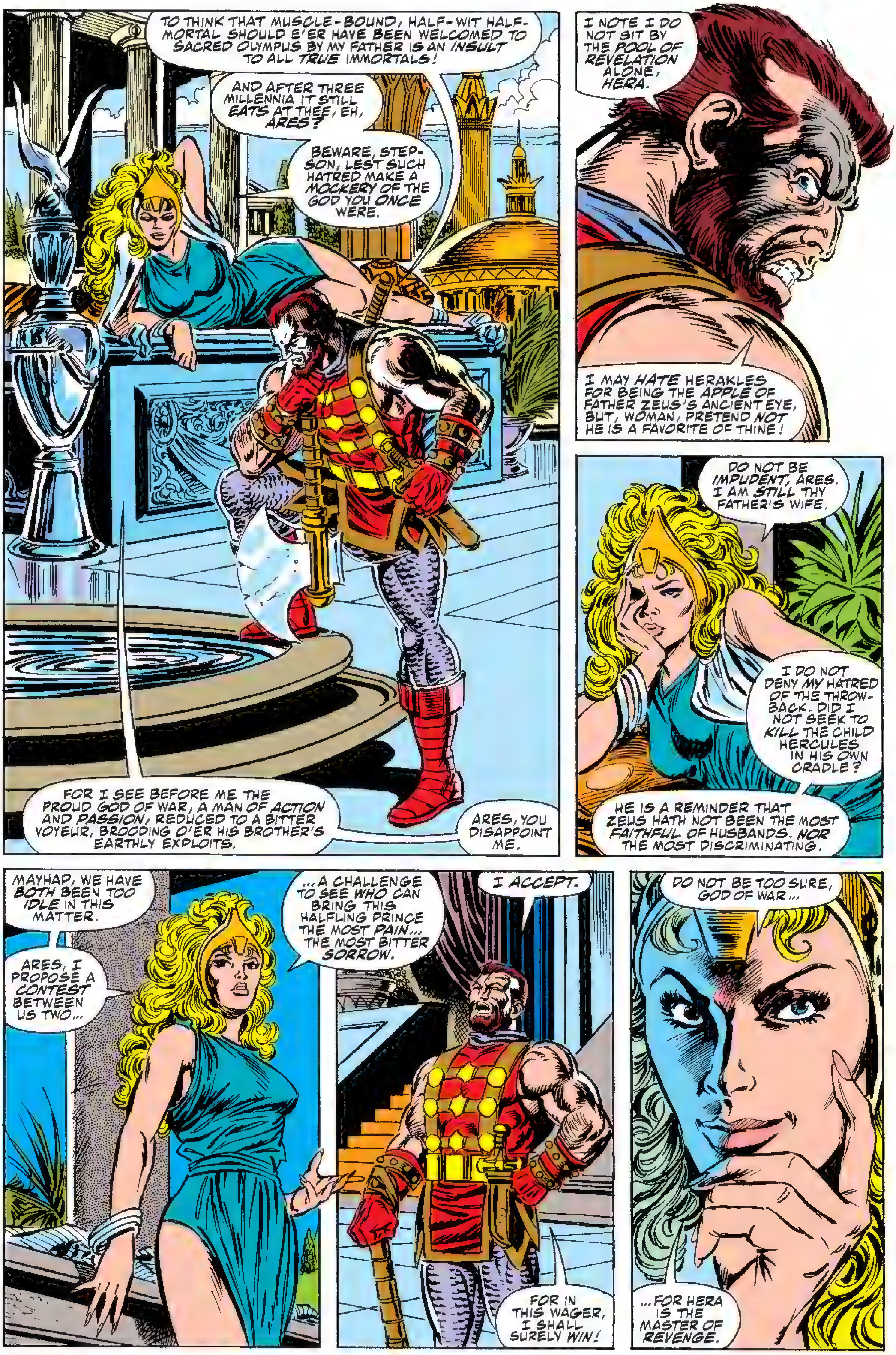
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

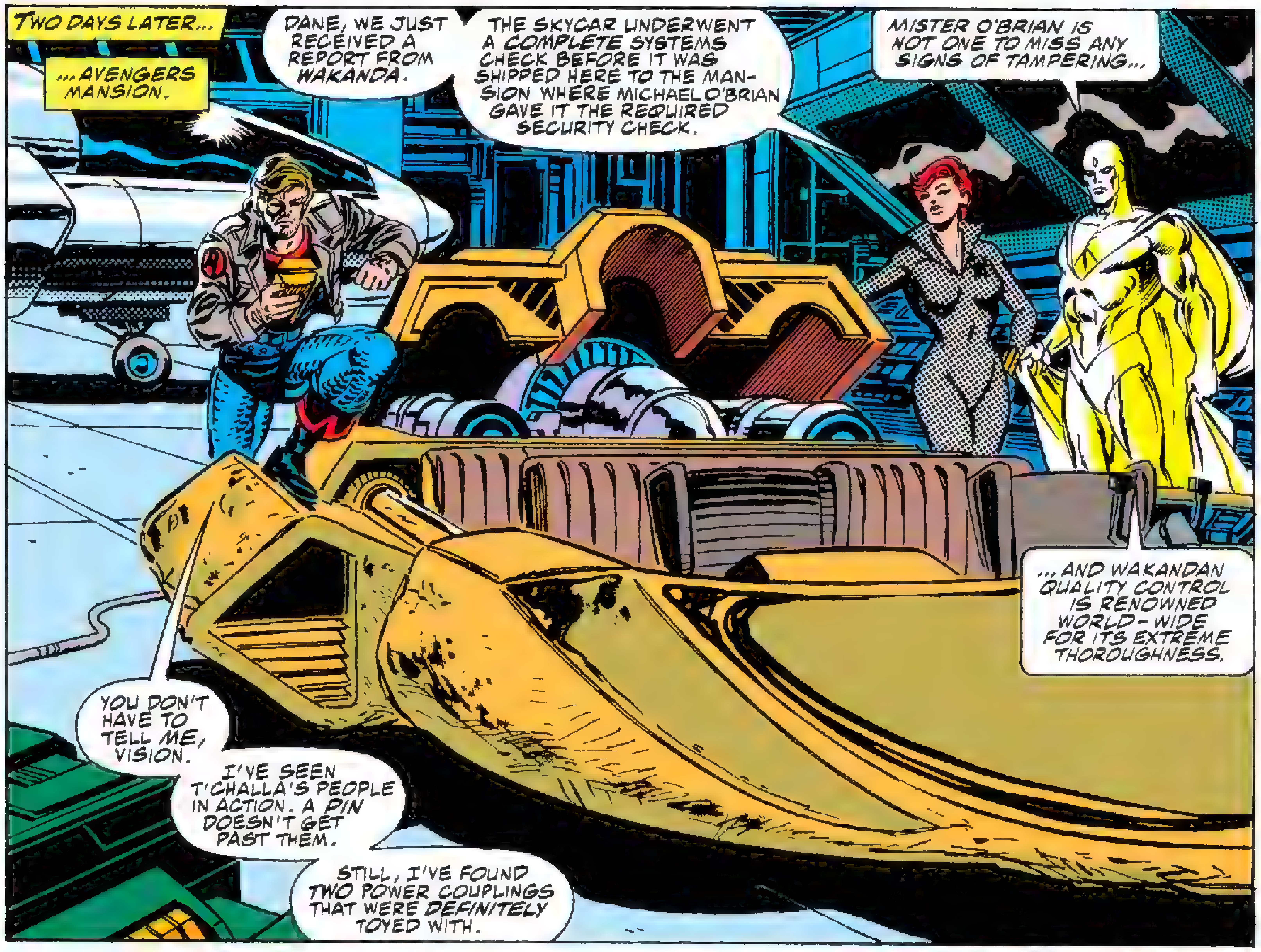

DEATH WAGER
BY THE SACRED BEARD OF FATHER ZEUS--!
DANE WHITMAN, HAST THOU GONE MAD?!
A TALE OF ANCIENT HATREDS BY:
BOB HARRAS WRITER . STEVE EPTING PENCILER
TOM PALMER INKER/COLORIST . BILL OAKLEY LETTERER
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR . TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

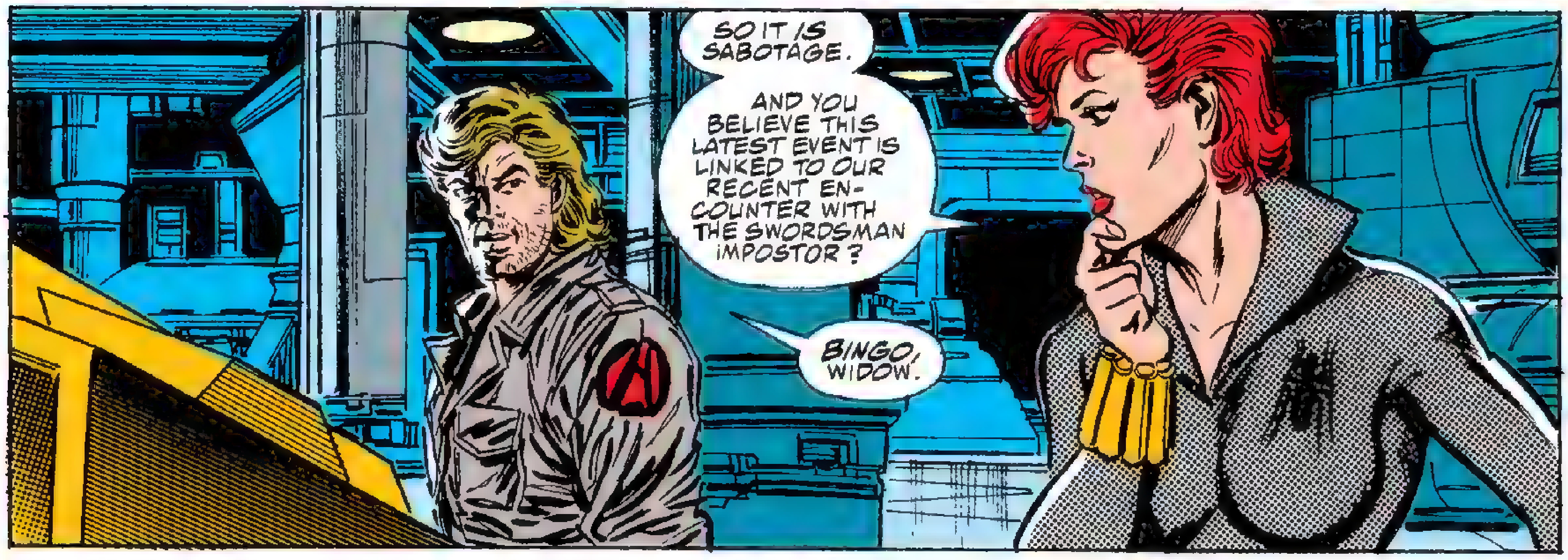

C'MON, HERC, WE'RE JUST HAVING SOME FUN BREAKING THIS BABY IN!
AFTER ALL, WE SPENT DAYS IN MARISSA DARROW'S APARTMENT SEARCHING FOR CLUES TO HER DISAPPEARANCE,* AND WE CAME UP WITH ZIP.
WE NEEDED A LITTLE RELEASE!
* IT HAPPENED LAST ISSUE.-- DETECTIVE RALF
WE...
UH, OH.
DANE, WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?!
WE'RE PICKING UP SPEED!
I KNOW--!
THE SHIP'S NOT RESPONDING TO THE THROTTLE, CRYSTAL!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, SHE'S NOT RESPONDING TO ANYTHING!
GREAT! NOW THE THRUSTERS ARE GOING INTO OVERDRIVE!
HANG ON, GUYS --
PAN AM
--'CAUSE THIS BABY IS OFFICIALLY OUTTA CONTROL!

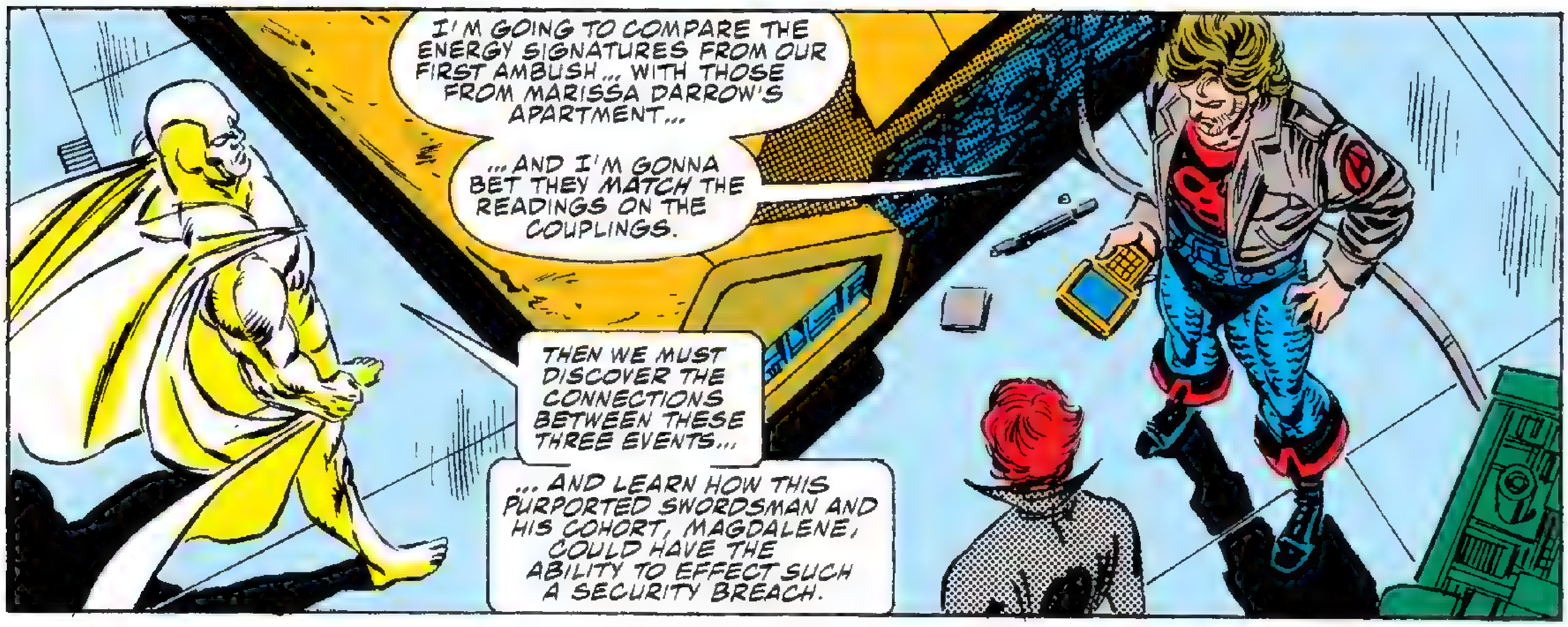

I'LL TRY TO COAX US DOWN...
...BUT WE GOTTA FIND SOMEPLACE TO LAND!
BEHOLD, BLACK KNIGHT... YONDER!
A CLOSED SECTION OF THE WEST SIDE HIGHWAY? WELL, IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING!
BUT WE'RE STILL COMING IN TOO FAST!
DANE, I'LL USE MY ELEMENTAL POWERS TO SUMMON UP A HEAD WIND...
...MAYBE THAT WILL HELP!
WE'RE SLOWING, CRYS...
...BUT NOT ENOUGH!
BRACE THYSELVES, GOOD FRIENDS...
...FOR THE PRINCE OF POWER...
...HAS A PLAN!!
SKREEEEEEEEEL
SKA-CRASH!

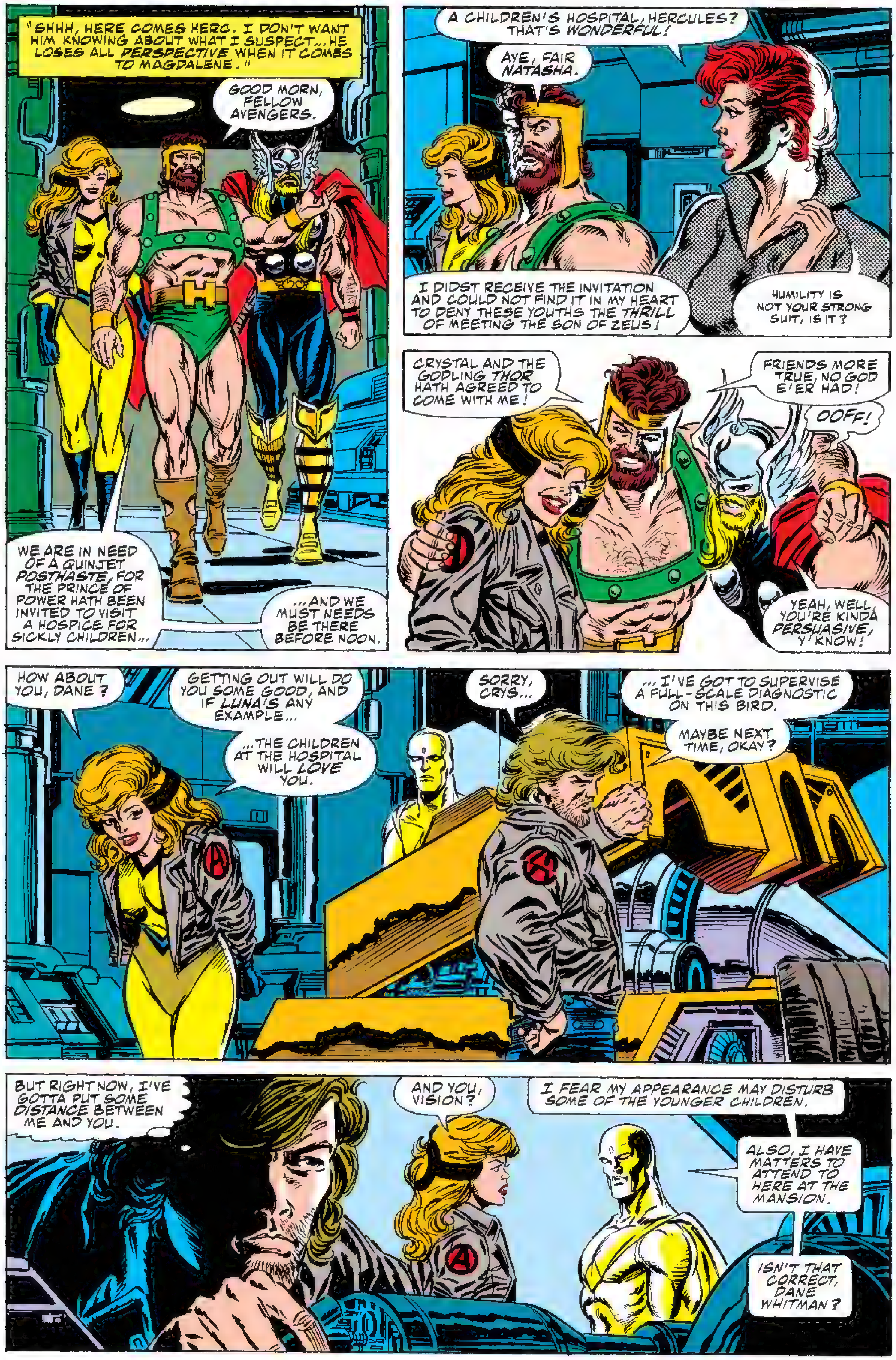

YOU'RE *DOING* IT, HERC!
YOU'RE BRINGING US TO A *STOP!*
OF COURSE...
...SUCH WAS MY INTENT!
RUMMBLLE!
SKREEE
THIS SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED.
THAT'S *FAIRLY OBVIOUS,* DANE.
NO. I MEAN THIS *SHOULDN'T* HAVE HAPPENED!
THIS SKYCAR WAS DESIGNED BY THE *BLACK PANTHER,* GUYS, AND T'CHALLA DOESN'T BUILD FAULTY AIRCRAFT.
HE JUST *DOESN'T.*
SOMETHING *CAUSED* THIS BIRD TO GO HAYWIRE. SOMETHING OR SOME*ONE.*
HERCULES!
YOUR HANDS--! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
'TIS NOTHING, FAIR CRYSTAL...
...FEAR NOT, BY MORN'S FIRST LIGHT, I SHALL BE *FULLY* HEALED!
ONE OF THE *PERKS* OF BEING AN OLYMPIAN DEITY, EH?
STILL, WHY DON'T WE TAKE YOU BACK TO THE MANSION'S INFIRMARY *JUST* TO MAKE SURE?
OLYMPIAN DEITY? FAH!

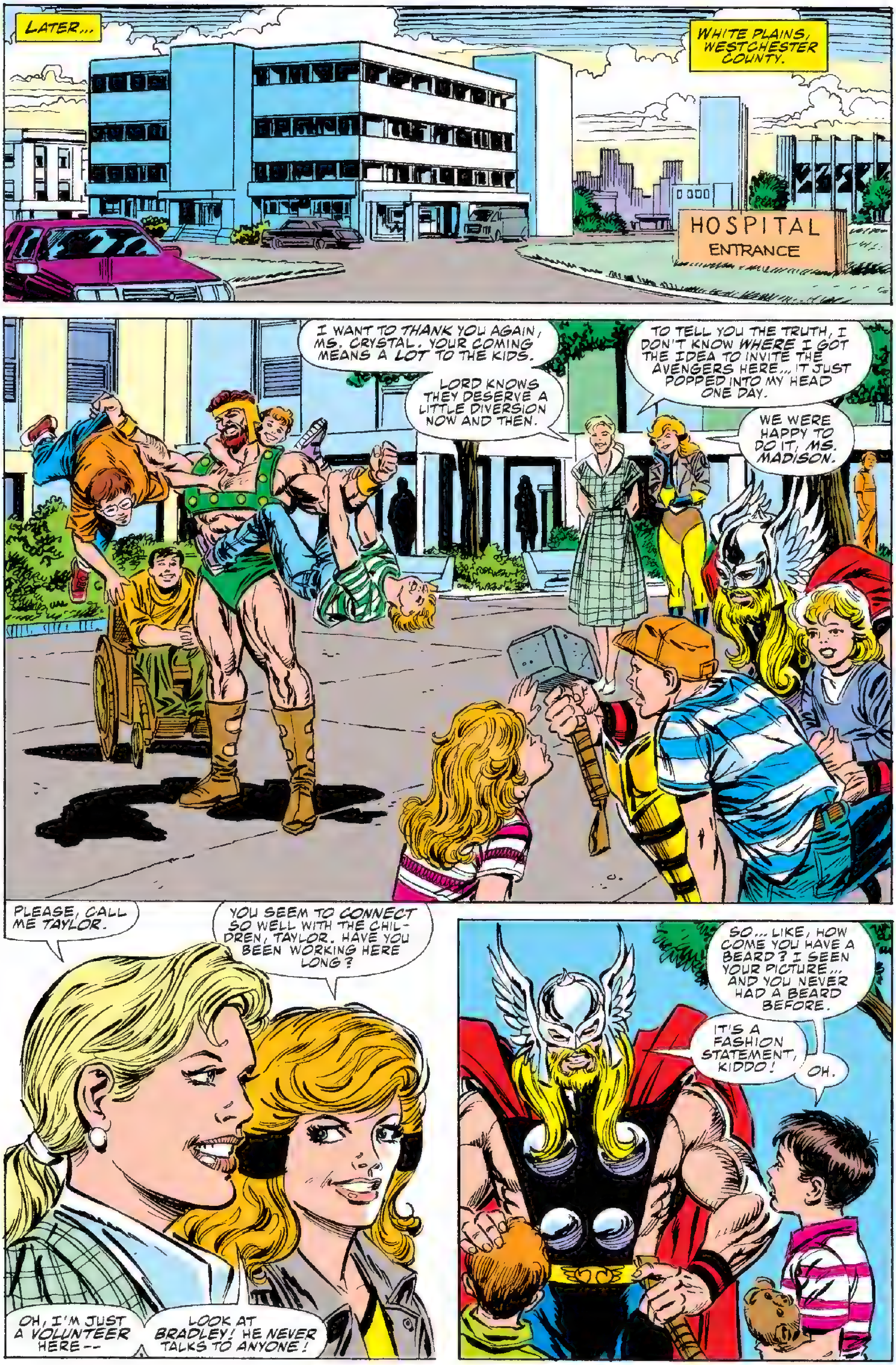

TO THINK THAT MUSCLE-BOUND, HALF-WIT HALF-MORTAL SHOULD E'ER HAVE BEEN WELCOMED TO SACRED OLYMPUS BY MY FATHER IS AN *INSULT* TO ALL *TRUE* IMMORTALS!
AND AFTER THREE MILLENNIA IT STILL *EATS* AT THEE, EH, *ARES?*
BEWARE, STEP-SON, LEST SUCH HATRED MAKE A *MOCKERY* OF THE GOD YOU *ONCE* WERE.
FOR I SEE BEFORE ME THE PROUD *GOD OF WAR*, A MAN OF *ACTION* AND *PASSION*, REDUCED TO A BITTER VOYEUR, BROODING O'ER HIS BROTHER'S EARTHLY EXPLOITS.
ARES, YOU DISAPPOINT ME.
I NOTE I DO NOT SIT BY THE *POOL OF REVELATION* ALONE, *HERA.*
I MAY *HATE* HERAKLES FOR BEING THE *APPLE* OF FATHER ZEUS'S ANCIENT EYE, BUT, WOMAN, PRETEND *NOT* HE IS A FAVORITE OF THINE!
DO NOT BE *IMPUDENT*, ARES. I AM *STILL* THY FATHER'S WIFE.
I DO NOT DENY *MY* HATRED OF THE THROW-BACK. DID I NOT SEEK TO *KILL* THE CHILD HERCULES IN HIS OWN CRADLE?
HE IS A REMINDER THAT ZEUS HATH NOT BEEN THE MOST *FAITHFUL* OF HUSBANDS. *NOR* THE MOST DISCRIMINATING.
MAYHAP, WE HAVE *BOTH* BEEN TOO *IDLE* IN THIS MATTER.
ARES, I PROPOSE A *CONTEST* BETWEEN US TWO...
...A CHALLENGE TO SEE *WHO* CAN BRING THIS HALFLING PRINCE THE MOST *PAIN*... THE MOST BITTER *SORROW*.
I *ACCEPT.*
FOR IN THIS WAGER, I SHALL SURELY *WIN!*
DO NOT BE TOO SURE, *GOD OF WAR*...
...FOR HERA IS THE *MASTER OF REVENGE.*

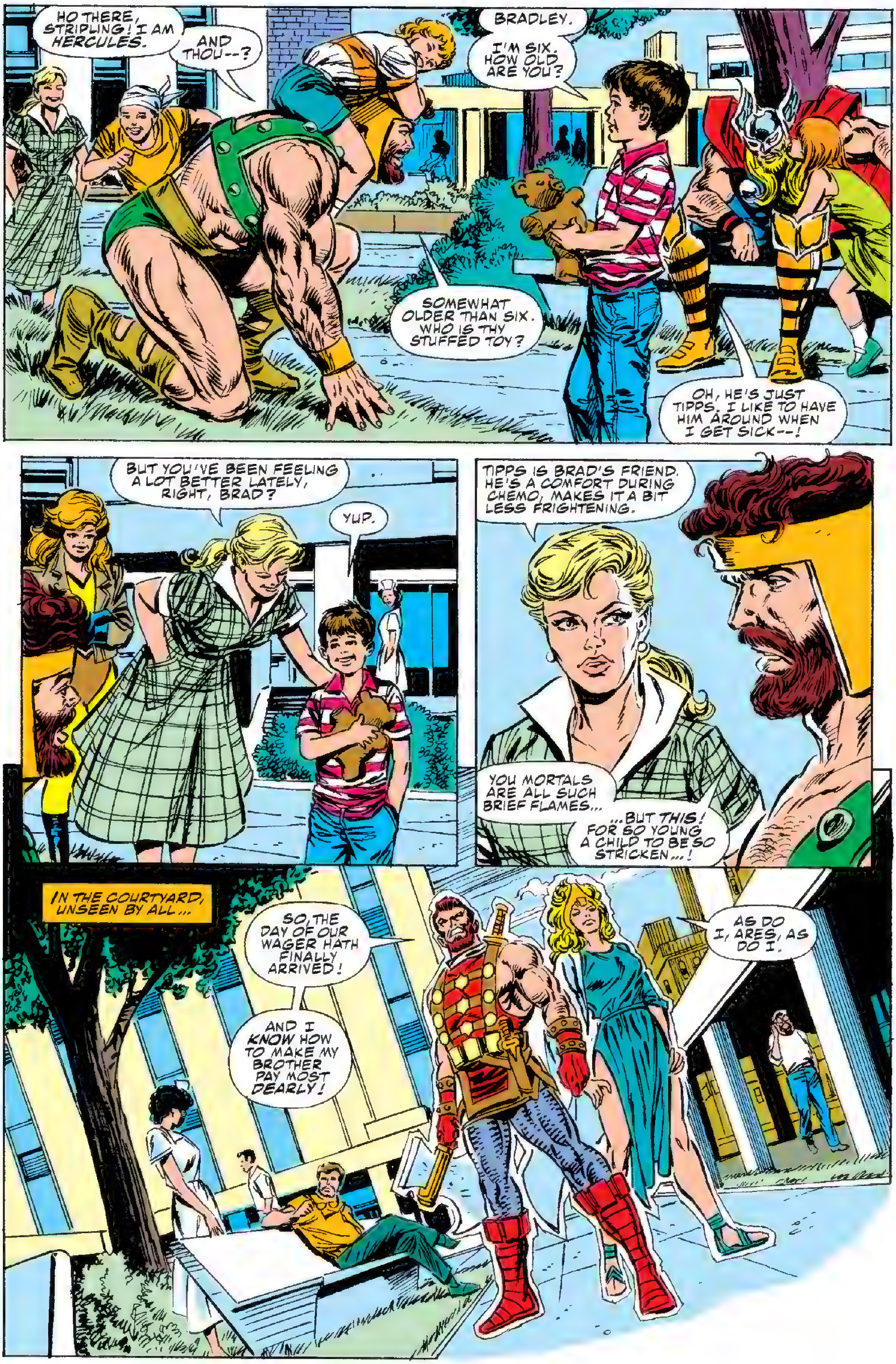

TWO DAYS LATER...
...AVENGERS MANSION.
DANE, WE JUST RECEIVED A REPORT FROM WAKANDA.
THE SKYCAR UNDERWENT A COMPLETE SYSTEMS CHECK BEFORE IT WAS SHIPPED HERE TO THE MANSION WHERE MICHAEL O'BRIAN GAVE IT THE REQUIRED SECURITY CHECK.
MISTER O'BRIAN IS NOT ONE TO MISS ANY SIGNS OF TAMPERING...
...AND WAKANDAN QUALITY CONTROL IS RENOWNED WORLD-WIDE FOR ITS EXTREME THOROUGHNESS.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME, VISION.
I'VE SEEN T'CHALLA'S PEOPLE IN ACTION. A PIN DOESN'T GET PAST THEM.
STILL, I'VE FOUND TWO POWER COUPLINGS THAT WERE DEFINITELY TOYED WITH.

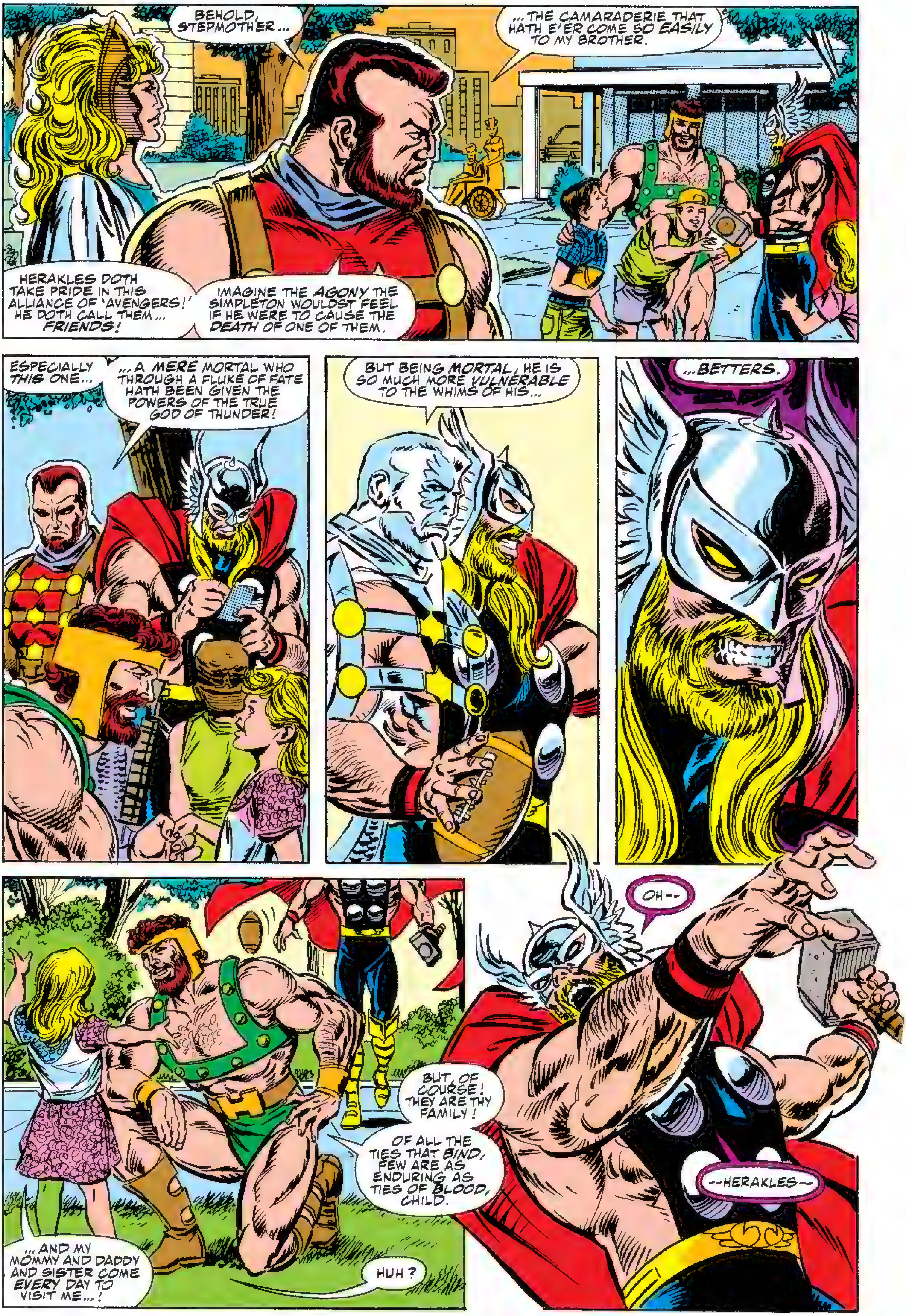

SO IT IS SABOTAGE.
AND YOU BELIEVE THIS LATEST EVENT IS LINKED TO OUR RECENT ENCOUNTER WITH THE SWORDSMAN IMPOSTOR?
BINGO, WIDOW.

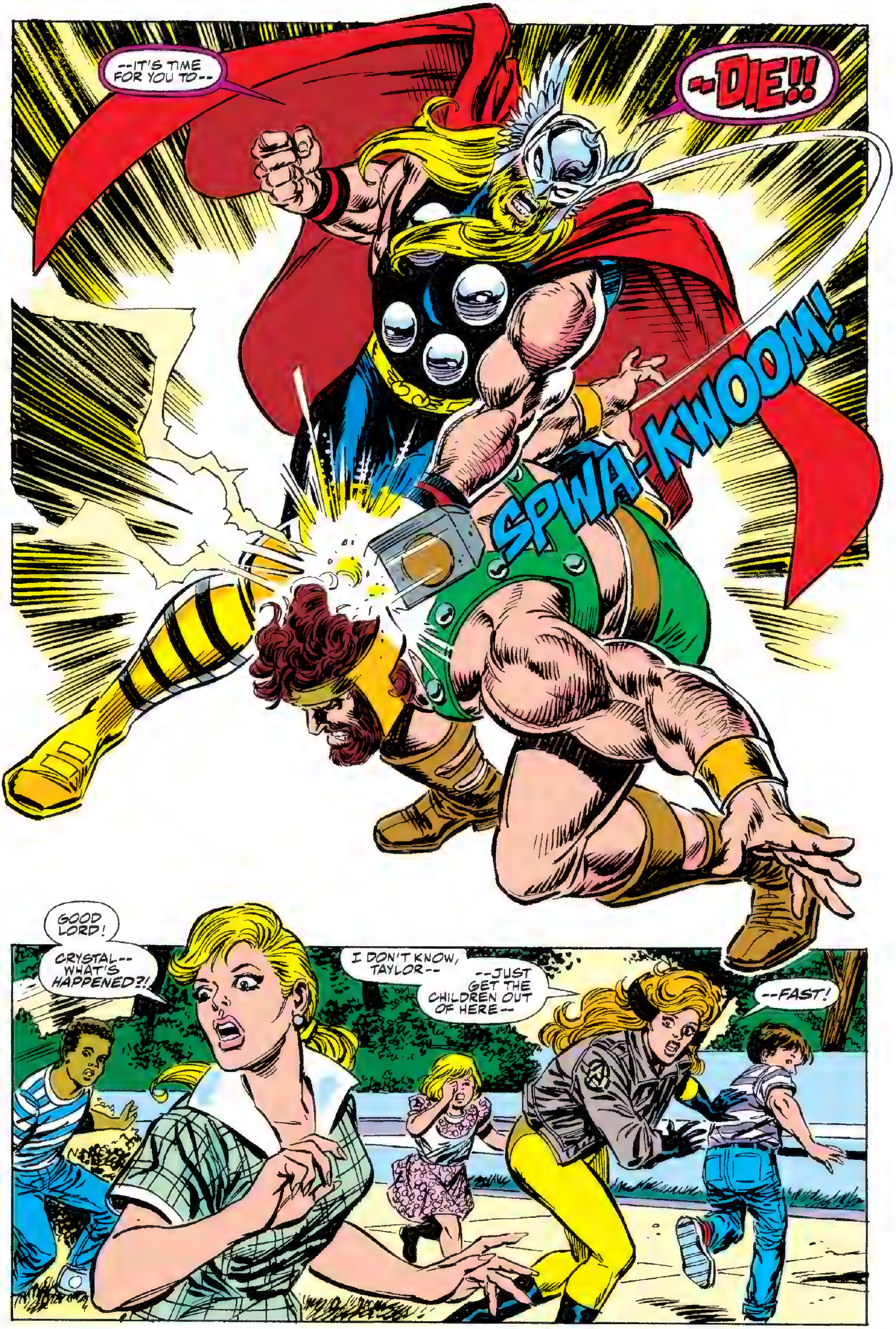

I'M GOING TO COMPARE THE ENERGY SIGNATURES FROM OUR FIRST AMBUSH... WITH THOSE FROM MARISSA DARROW'S APARTMENT...
...AND I'M GONNA BET THEY MATCH THE READINGS ON THE COUPLINGS.
THEN WE MUST DISCOVER THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THESE THREE EVENTS...
...AND LEARN HOW THIS PURPORTED SWORDSMAN AND HIS COHORT, MAGDALENE, COULD HAVE THE ABILITY TO EFFECT SUCH A SECURITY BREACH.

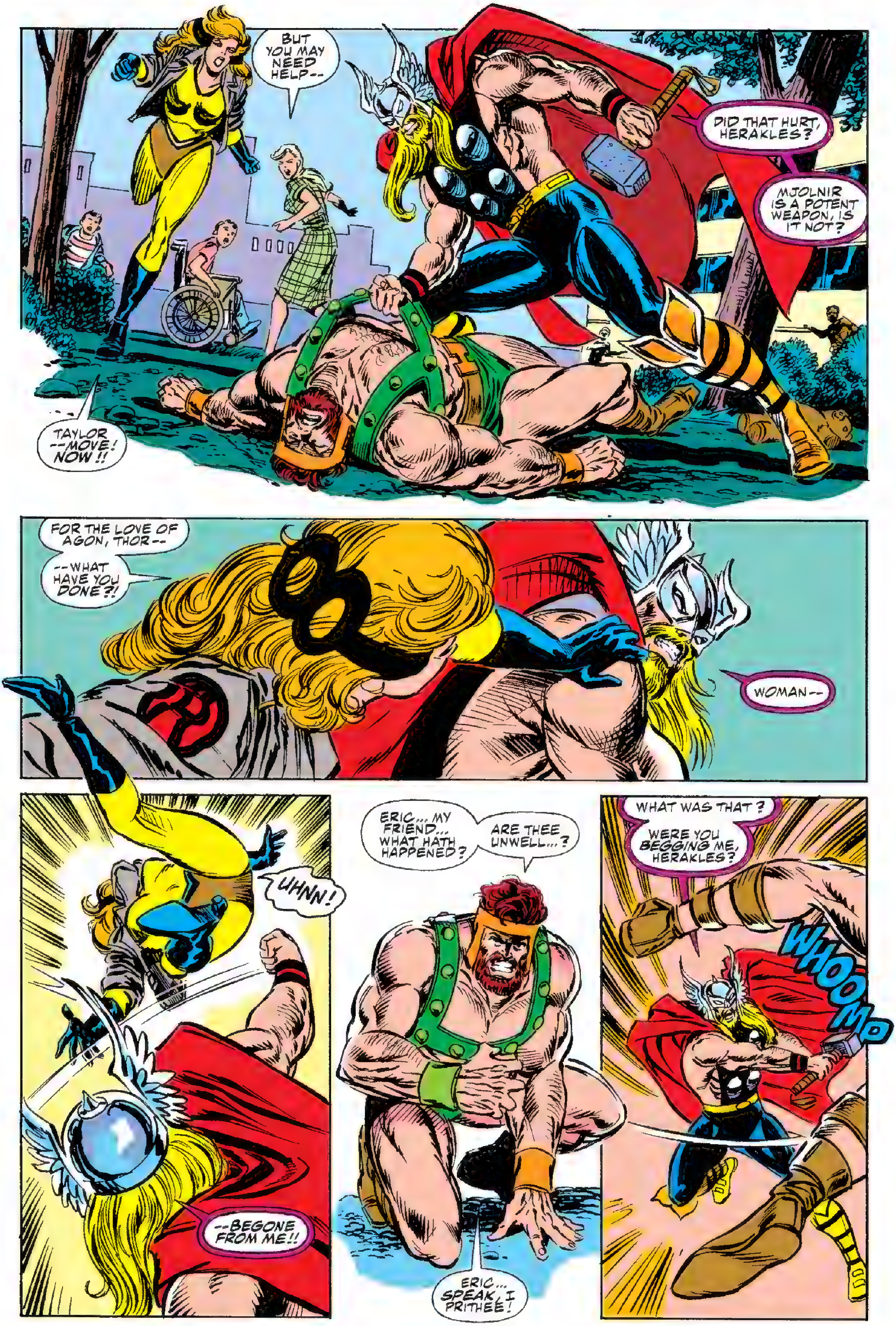

"SHHH, HERE COMES HERC. I DON'T WANT HIM KNOWING ABOUT WHAT I SUSPECT... HE LOSES ALL *PERSPECTIVE* WHEN IT COMES TO MAGDALENE."
GOOD MORN, FELLOW AVENGERS.
WE ARE IN NEED OF A QUINJET *POSTHASTE*, FOR THE PRINCE OF POWER HATH BEEN INVITED TO VISIT A HOSPICE FOR SICKLY CHILDREN...
...AND WE MUST NEEDS BE THERE BEFORE NOON.
A CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, HERCULES? THAT'S *WONDERFUL!*
AYE, FAIR *NATASHA*.
I DIDST RECEIVE THE INVITATION AND COULD NOT FIND IT IN MY HEART TO DENY THESE YOUTHS THE *THRILL* OF MEETING THE SON OF ZEUS!
HUMILITY IS NOT YOUR STRONG SUIT, IS IT?
CRYSTAL AND THE GODLING *THOR* HATH AGREED TO COME WITH ME!
FRIENDS MORE TRUE, NO GOD E'ER HAD!
OOFF!
YEAH, WELL, YOU'RE KINDA *PERSUASIVE*, Y'KNOW!
HOW ABOUT YOU, DANE?
GETTING OUT WILL DO YOU SOME GOOD, AND IF *LUNA'S* ANY EXAMPLE...
...THE CHILDREN AT THE HOSPITAL WILL *LOVE* YOU.
SORRY, CRYS...
...I'VE GOT TO SUPERVISE A FULL-SCALE DIAGNOSTIC ON THIS BIRD.
MAYBE NEXT TIME, OKAY?
BUT RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOTTA PUT SOME *DISTANCE* BETWEEN ME AND YOU.
AND YOU, VISION?
I FEAR MY APPEARANCE MAY DISTURB SOME OF THE YOUNGER CHILDREN.
ALSO, I HAVE MATTERS TO ATTEND TO HERE AT THE MANSION.
ISN'T THAT CORRECT, DANE WHITMAN?


LATER...
WHITE PLAINS, WESTCHESTER COUNTY.
HOSPITAL ENTRANCE
I WANT TO THANK YOU AGAIN, MS. CRYSTAL. YOUR COMING MEANS A LOT TO THE KIDS.
LORD KNOWS THEY DESERVE A LITTLE DIVERSION NOW AND THEN.
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I DON'T KNOW WHERE I GOT THE IDEA TO INVITE THE AVENGERS HERE... IT JUST POPPED INTO MY HEAD ONE DAY.
WE WERE HAPPY TO DO IT, MS. MADISON.
PLEASE, CALL ME TAYLOR.
YOU SEEM TO CONNECT SO WELL WITH THE CHILDREN, TAYLOR. HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING HERE LONG?
OH, I'M JUST A VOLUNTEER HERE--
LOOK AT BRADLEY! HE NEVER TALKS TO ANYONE!
SO... LIKE, HOW COME YOU HAVE A BEARD? I SEEN YOUR PICTURE... AND YOU NEVER HAD A BEARD BEFORE.
IT'S A FASHION STATEMENT, KIDDO!
OH.

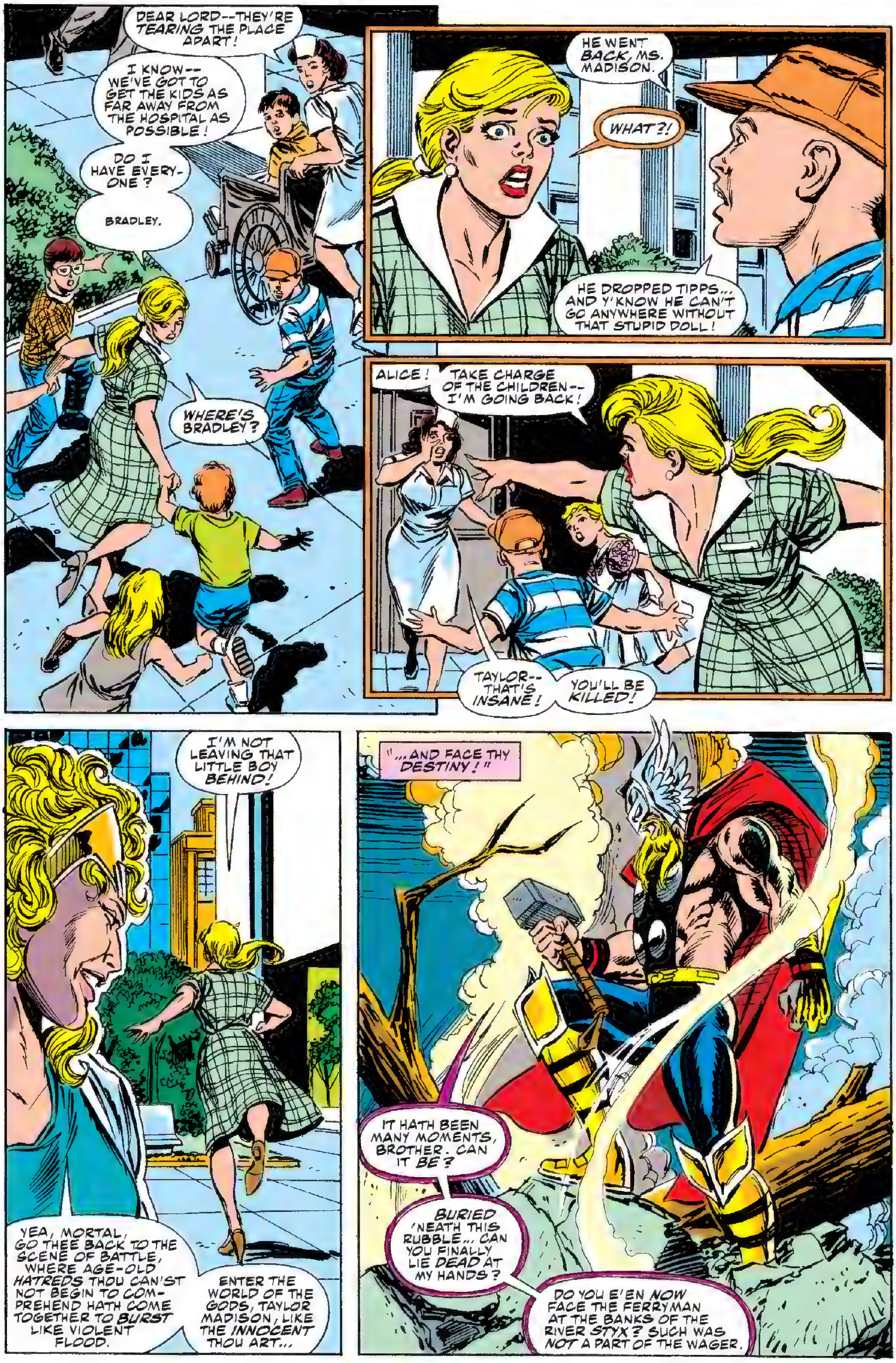

HO THERE, STRIPLING! I AM HERCULES.
AND THOU--?
BRADLEY.
I'M SIX. HOW OLD ARE YOU?
SOMEWHAT OLDER THAN SIX. WHO IS THY STUFFED TOY?
OH, HE'S JUST TIPPS. I LIKE TO HAVE HIM AROUND WHEN I GET SICK--!
BUT YOU'VE BEEN FEELING A LOT BETTER LATELY, RIGHT, BRAD?
YUP.
TIPPS IS BRAD'S FRIEND. HE'S A COMFORT DURING CHEMO, MAKES IT A BIT LESS FRIGHTENING.
YOU MORTALS ARE ALL SUCH BRIEF FLAMES...
...BUT THIS! FOR SO YOUNG A CHILD TO BE SO STRICKEN...!
IN THE COURTYARD, UNSEEN BY ALL...
SO, THE DAY OF OUR WAGER HATH FINALLY ARRIVED!
AND I KNOW HOW TO MAKE MY BROTHER PAY MOST DEARLY!
AS DO I, ARES, AS DO I.

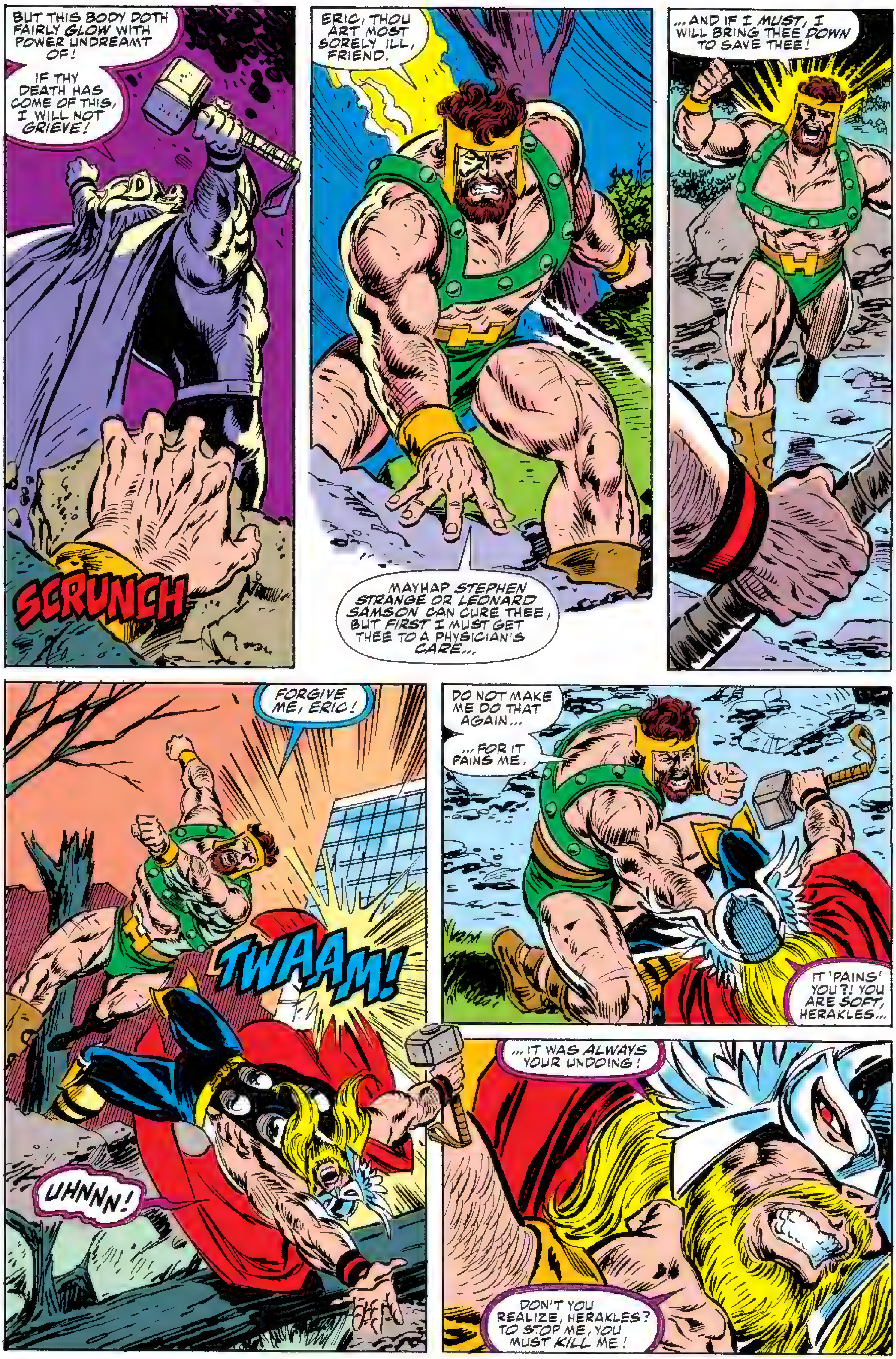

BEHOLD, STEPMOTHER...
...THE CAMARADERIE THAT HATH E'ER COME SO *EASILY* TO MY BROTHER.
HERAKLES DOTH TAKE PRIDE IN THIS ALLIANCE OF 'AVENGERS!' HE DOTH CALL THEM... *FRIENDS!*
IMAGINE THE *AGONY* THE SIMPLETON WOULDST FEEL IF HE WERE TO CAUSE THE *DEATH* OF ONE OF THEM.
ESPECIALLY *THIS* ONE...
...A *MERE* MORTAL WHO THROUGH A FLUKE OF FATE HATH BEEN GIVEN THE POWERS OF THE TRUE GOD OF THUNDER!
BUT BEING *MORTAL*, HE IS SO MUCH MORE *VULNERABLE* TO THE WHIMS OF HIS...
...BETTERS.
...AND MY MOMMY AND DADDY AND SISTER COME *EVERY* DAY TO VISIT ME...!
HUH?
BUT, OF COURSE! THEY ARE THY FAMILY!
OF ALL THE TIES THAT *BIND*, FEW ARE AS ENDURING AS TIES OF *BLOOD*, CHILD.
OH--
--HERAKLES--

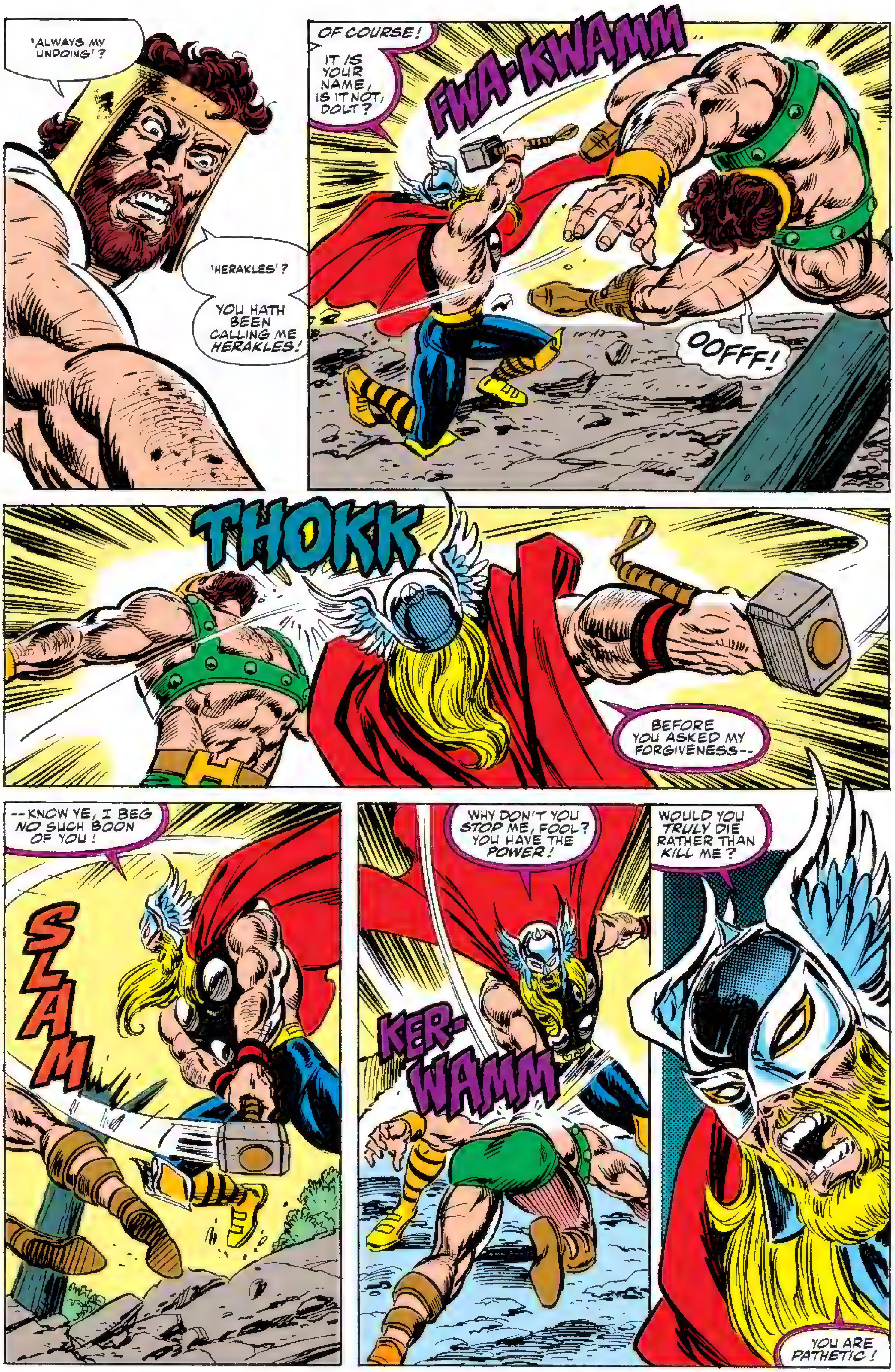

--IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO--
--DIE!!
SPWA-KWOOM!
GOOD LORD!
CRYSTAL--WHAT'S HAPPENED?!
I DON'T KNOW, TAYLOR--
--JUST GET THE CHILDREN OUT OF HERE--
--FAST!


BUT YOU MAY NEED HELP--
DID THAT HURT, HERAKLES?
MJOLNIR IS A POTENT WEAPON, IS IT NOT?
TAYLOR --MOVE! NOW!!
FOR THE LOVE OF AGON, THOR--
--WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
WOMAN--
UHNN!
--BEGONE FROM ME!!
ERIC... MY FRIEND... WHAT HATH HAPPENED?
ARE THEE UNWELL...?
ERIC... SPEAK, I PRITHEE!
WHAT WAS THAT?
WERE YOU BEGGING ME, HERAKLES?
WHOOOMP

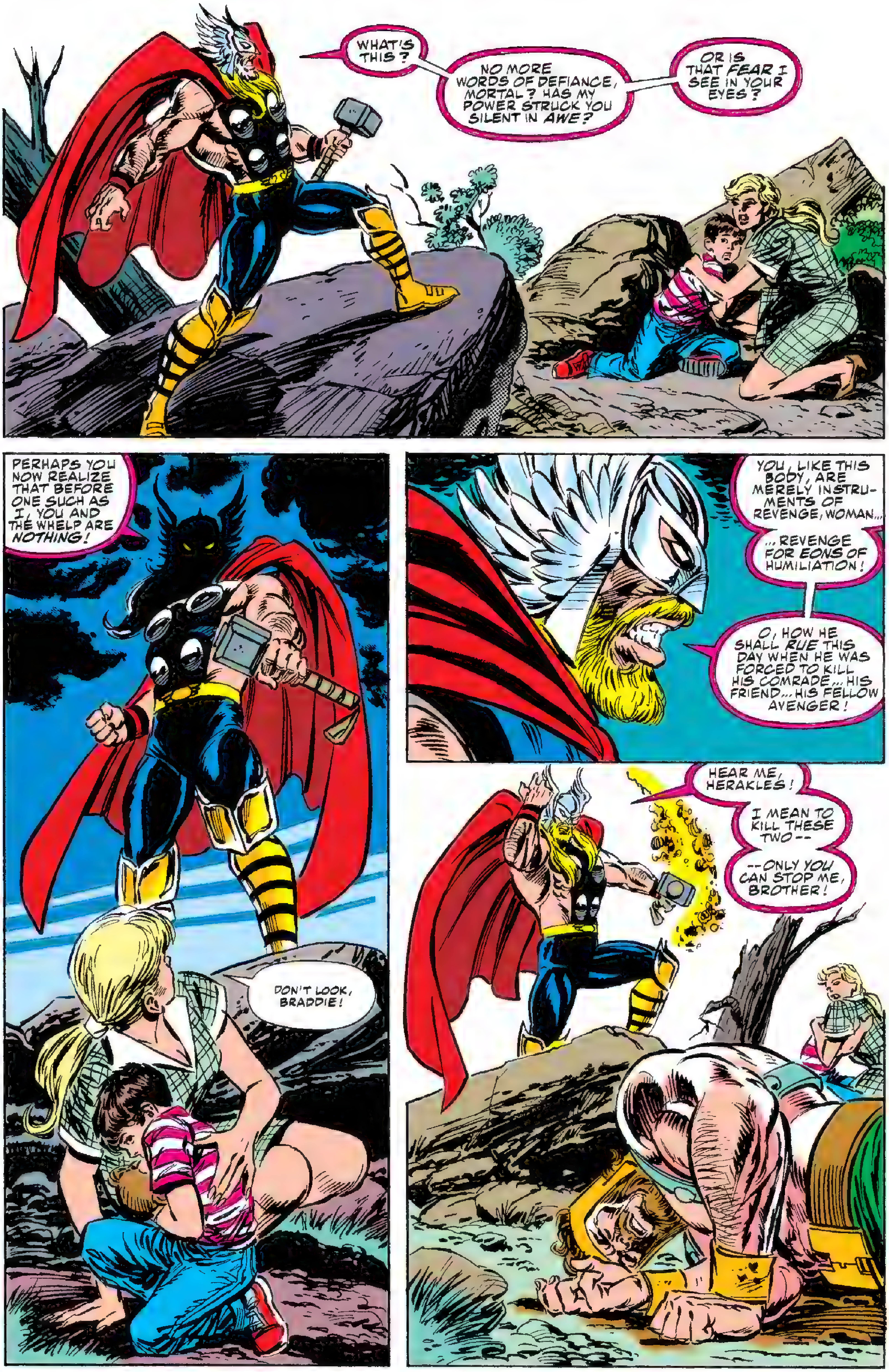
OOOFF!
KERSMASHHH
IS IT POSSIBLE?
COULD THE POWER OF THOR HATH PROVEN TOO MUCH FOR ERIC MASTERSON'S MIND TO BEAR?
I MUST STOP HIM, BUT WITHOUT--
CRYSTAL!!
ZEUS BE THANKED! SHE IS MERELY STUNNED!
ERIC MUST BE MAD TO SO CRUELLY ATTACK THE MOST GENTLE OF AVENGERS!
SCRUNCH
PERHAPS I AM INSANE, HERAKLES!
IF SO--HOW DO YOU STOP SUCH A MADMAN? HOW DO YOU STOP THE POWER OF THOR?!
HOW?!?
SMASKKH

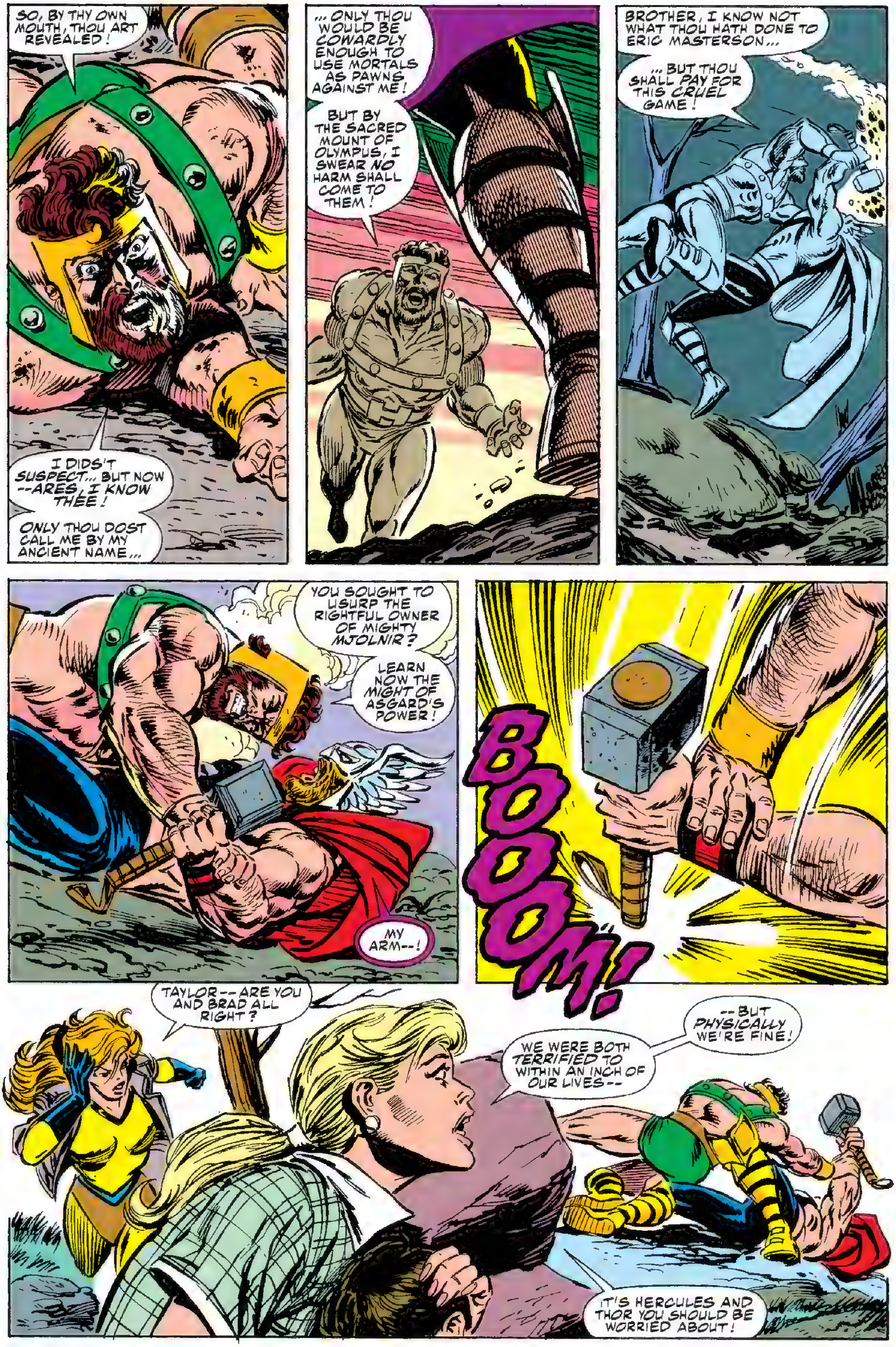

DEAR LORD--THEY'RE *TEARING* THE PLACE APART!
I KNOW--WE'VE GOT TO GET THE KIDS AS FAR AWAY FROM THE HOSPITAL AS POSSIBLE!
DO I HAVE EVERYONE?
BRADLEY.
WHERE'S BRADLEY?
HE WENT *BACK*, MS. MADISON.
WHAT?!
HE DROPPED TIPPS... AND Y'KNOW HE CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT THAT STUPID DOLL!
ALICE! TAKE CHARGE OF THE CHILDREN--I'M GOING BACK!
TAYLOR--THAT'S *INSANE!*
YOU'LL BE *KILLED!*
I'M NOT LEAVING THAT LITTLE BOY *BEHIND!*
YEA, MORTAL, GO THEE BACK TO THE SCENE OF BATTLE, WHERE AGE-OLD *HATREDS* THOU CAN'ST NOT BEGIN TO COMPREHEND HATH COME TOGETHER TO *BURST* LIKE VIOLENT FLOOD.
ENTER THE WORLD OF THE GODS, TAYLOR MADISON, LIKE THE *INNOCENT* THOU ART...
"...AND FACE THY *DESTINY!*"
IT HATH BEEN MANY MOMENTS, BROTHER. CAN IT *BE?*
BURIED 'NEATH THIS RUBBLE... CAN YOU FINALLY LIE *DEAD* AT MY HANDS?
DO YOU E'EN *NOW* FACE THE FERRYMAN AT THE BANKS OF THE RIVER *STYX?* SUCH WAS *NOT* A PART OF THE WAGER.

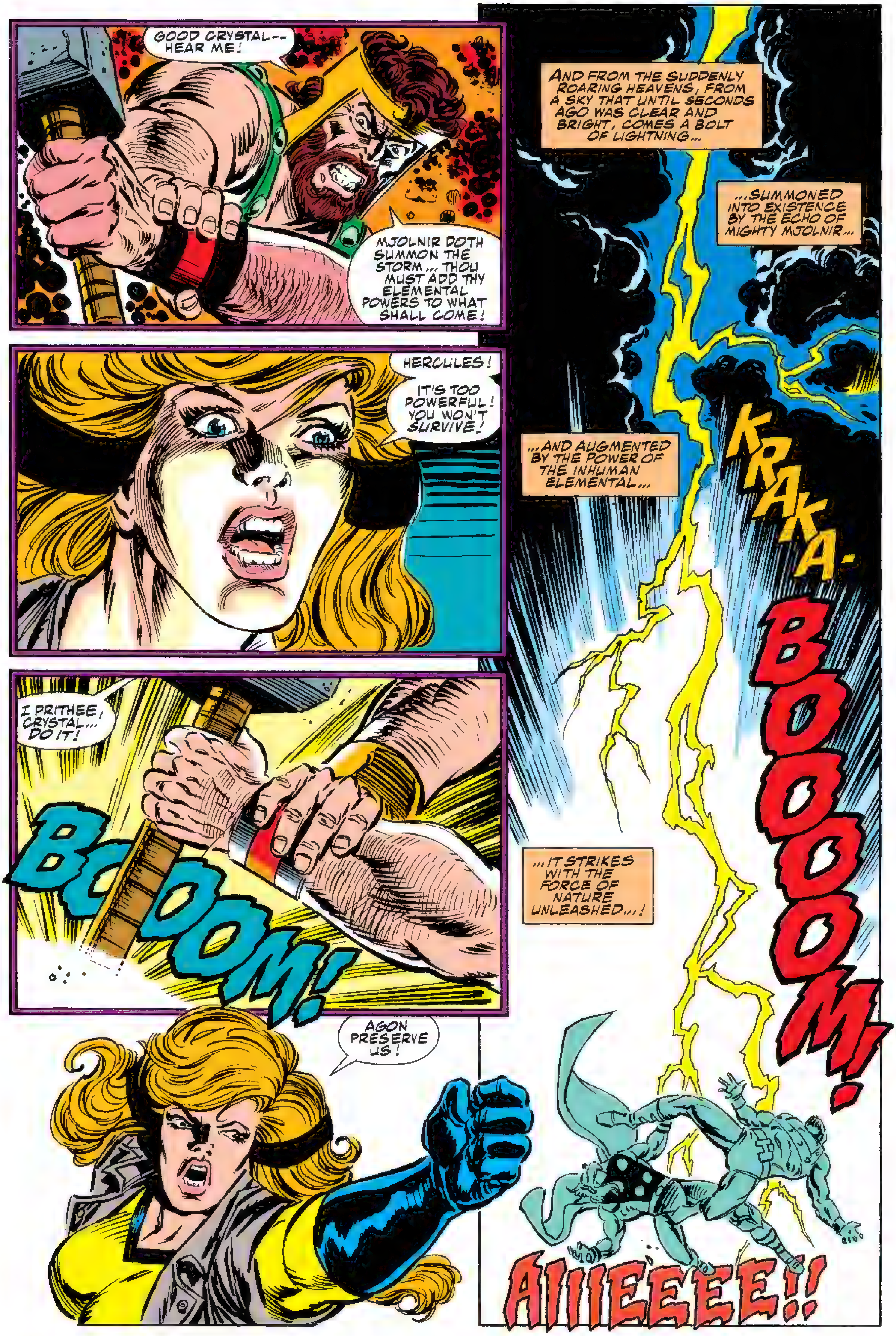

BUT THIS BODY DOTH FAIRLY *GLOW* WITH POWER UNDREAMT OF!
IF THY DEATH HAS COME OF THIS, I WILL NOT GRIEVE!
SCRUNCH
ERIC, THOU ART MOST SORELY ILL, FRIEND.
MAYHAP *STEPHEN STRANGE* OR *LEONARD SAMSON* CAN CURE THEE, BUT *FIRST* I MUST GET THEE TO A PHYSICIAN'S CARE...
...AND IF I *MUST*, I WILL BRING THEE *DOWN* TO SAVE THEE!
FORGIVE ME, ERIC!
TWAAM!
UHNNN!
DO NOT MAKE ME DO THAT AGAIN...
...FOR IT PAINS ME.
IT 'PAINS' YOU?! YOU ARE *SOFT*, HERAKLES...
...IT WAS ALWAYS YOUR UNDOING!
DON'T YOU REALIZE, HERAKLES? TO STOP ME, YOU MUST *KILL* ME!

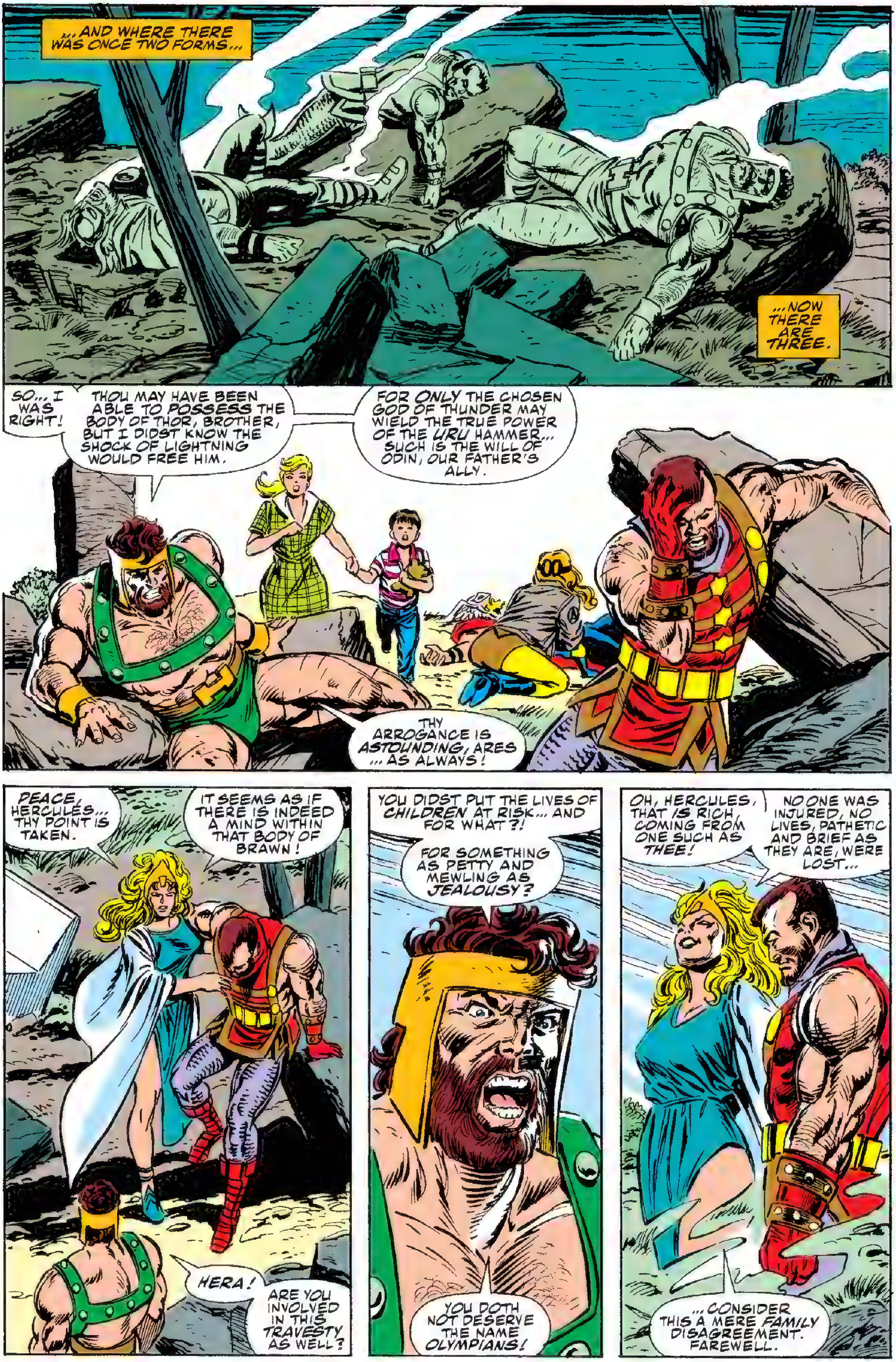

'ALWAYS MY UNDOING'?
OF COURSE! IT IS YOUR NAME, IS IT NOT, DOLT?
FWA-KWAMM
'HERAKLES'?
YOU HATH BEEN CALLING ME HERAKLES!
OOFFF!
THOKK
BEFORE YOU ASKED MY FORGIVENESS--
--KNOW YE, I BEG NO SUCH BOON OF YOU!
SLAM
WHY DON'T YOU STOP ME, FOOL? YOU HAVE THE POWER!
KER-WAMM
WOULD YOU TRULY DIE RATHER THAN KILL ME?
YOU ARE PATHETIC!

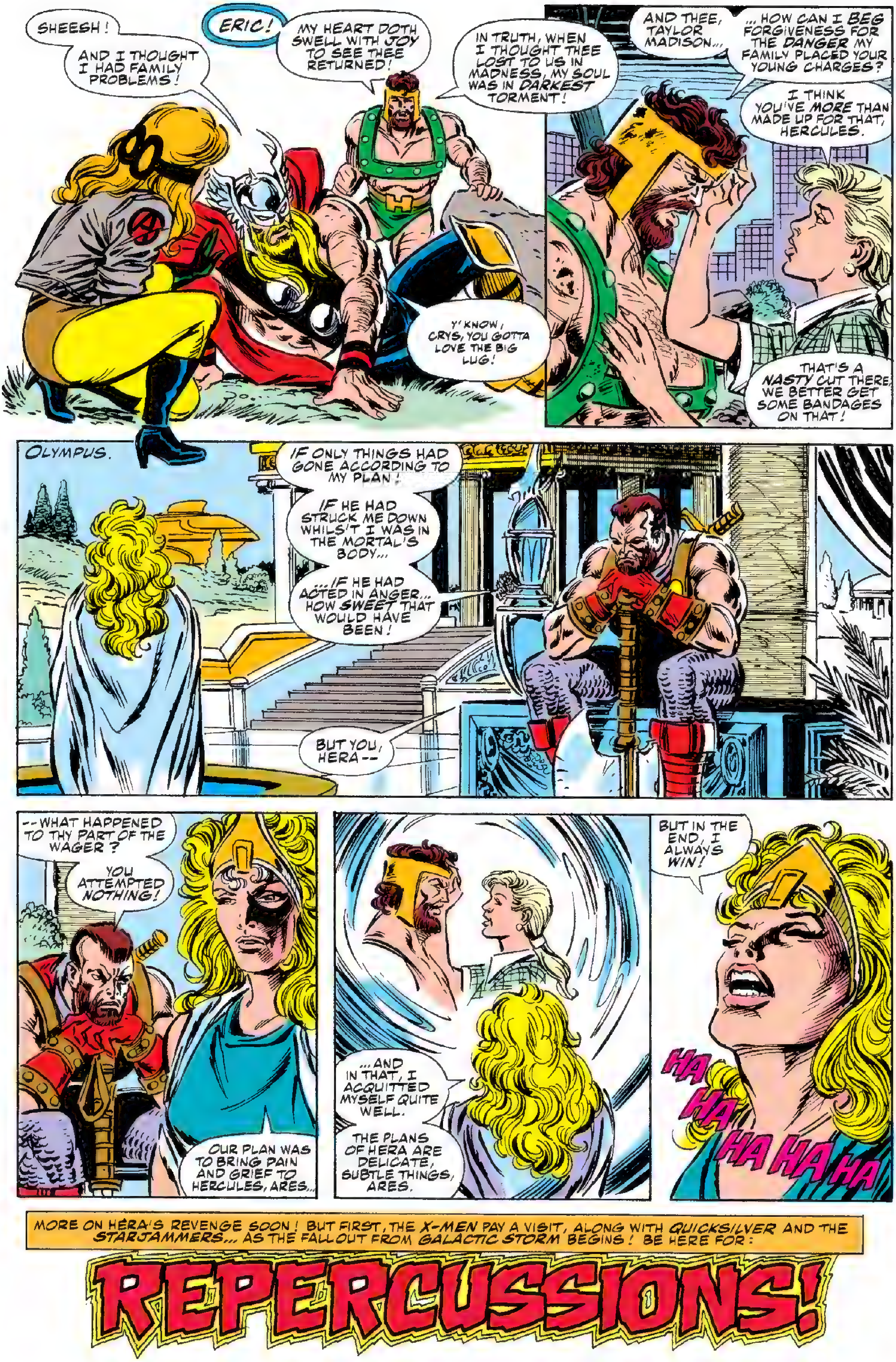
TIBBS! *THERE* YOU ARE!
WE SHOULDN'T BE HERE. IF WE STAY, WE COULD GET IN REAL SERIOUS--
--TROUBLE.
AHHH... CAN IT BE THAT FORTUNE *FAVORS* ME?
PERHAPS YOU ARE THE *INCENTIVE* THE PRINCE OF POWER NEEDS.
COME TO ME, CHILD.
IT IS FAIRLY OBVIOUS HERAKLES' RELUCTANCE TO HARM THIS BODY IS *DEEPLY*, IF NOT *FOOLISHLY*, FELT...
...BUT IF *ANOTHER* SUCH AS YOU WERE THREATENED, WHAT CHOICE WOULD HE HAVE?
COME, BOY... I HAVE NEED OF YOU.
KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF HIM!
I SWEAR IF YOU *SO MUCH* AS TOUCH HIM, I'LL--
YOU'LL WHAT, WOMAN?
DO YOU *DARE* THREATEN A GOD?


WHAT'S THIS?
NO MORE WORDS OF DEFIANCE, MORTAL? HAS MY POWER STRUCK YOU SILENT IN *AWE*?
OR IS THAT *FEAR* I SEE IN YOUR EYES?
PERHAPS YOU NOW REALIZE THAT BEFORE ONE SUCH AS I, YOU AND THE WHELP ARE *NOTHING*!
DON'T LOOK, BRADDIE!
YOU, LIKE THIS BODY, ARE MERELY INSTRUMENTS OF REVENGE, WOMAN...
...REVENGE FOR *EONS* OF HUMILIATION!
O, HOW HE SHALL *RUE* THIS DAY WHEN HE WAS FORCED TO KILL HIS COMRADE... HIS FRIEND... HIS FELLOW AVENGER!
HEAR ME, HERAKLES!
I MEAN TO KILL THESE TWO--
--ONLY *YOU* CAN STOP ME, BROTHER!

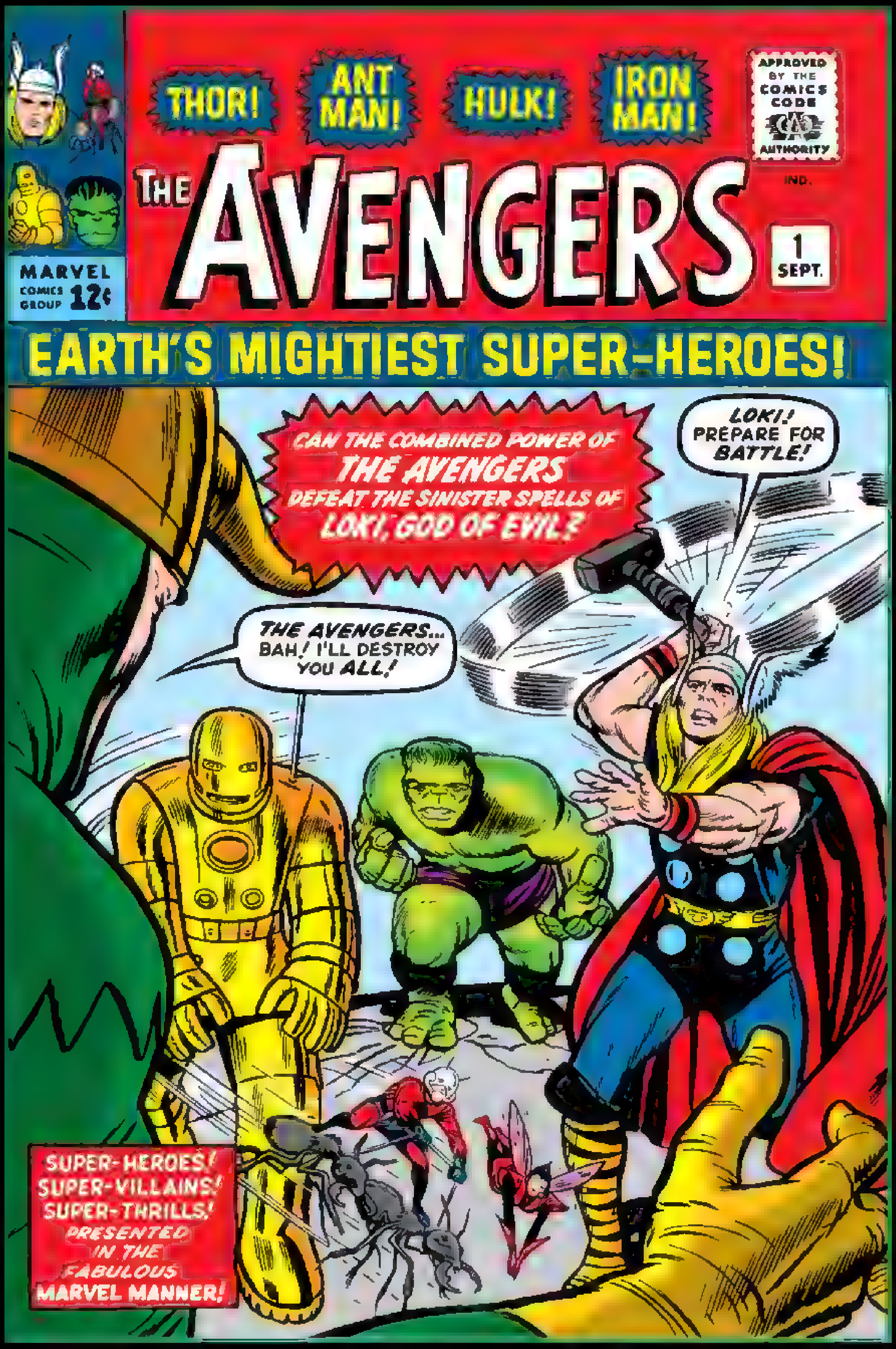

SO, BY THY OWN MOUTH, THOU ART REVEALED!
I DIDS'T SUSPECT... BUT NOW --ARES, I KNOW THEE!
ONLY THOU DOST CALL ME BY MY ANCIENT NAME...
...ONLY THOU WOULD BE COWARDLY ENOUGH TO USE MORTALS AS PAWNS AGAINST ME!
BUT BY THE SACRED MOUNT OF OLYMPUS, I SWEAR NO HARM SHALL COME TO THEM!
BROTHER, I KNOW NOT WHAT THOU HATH DONE TO ERIC MASTERSON...
...BUT THOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS CRUEL GAME!
YOU SOUGHT TO USURP THE RIGHTFUL OWNER OF MIGHTY MJOLNIR?
LEARN NOW THE MIGHT OF ASGARD'S POWER!
MY ARM--!
BOOOOM!
TAYLOR--ARE YOU AND BRAD ALL RIGHT?
WE WERE BOTH TERRIFIED TO WITHIN AN INCH OF OUR LIVES--
--BUT PHYSICALLY WE'RE FINE!
IT'S HERCULES AND THOR YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT!

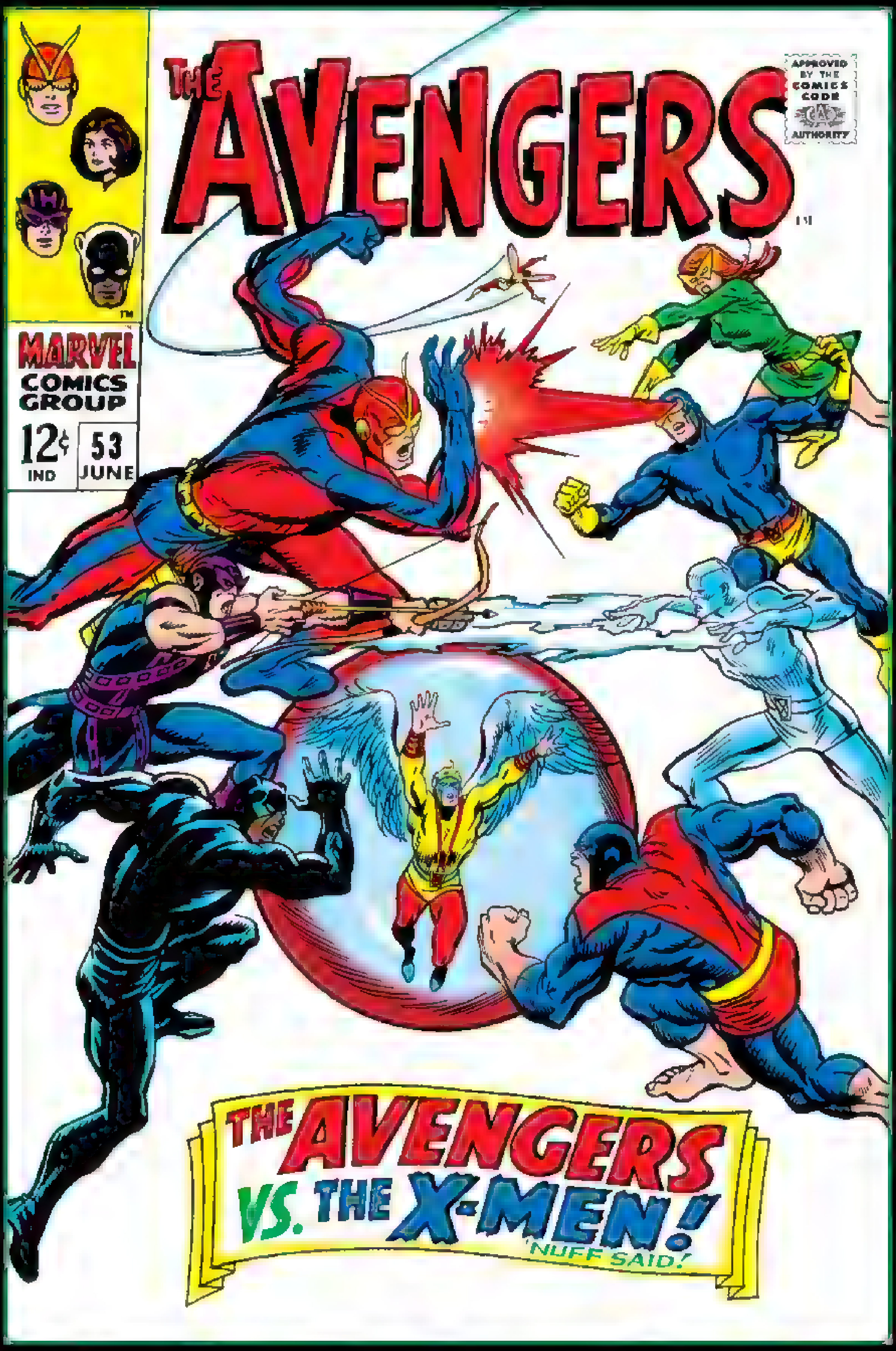

GOOD CRYSTAL-- HEAR ME!
MJOLNIR DOTH SUMMON THE STORM... THOU MUST ADD THY ELEMENTAL POWERS TO WHAT SHALL COME!
HERCULES!
IT'S TOO POWERFUL! YOU WON'T SURVIVE!
I PRITHEE, CRYSTAL... DO IT!
BOOOM!
AGON PRESERVE US!
AND FROM THE SUDDENLY ROARING HEAVENS, FROM A SKY THAT UNTIL SECONDS AGO WAS CLEAR AND BRIGHT, COMES A BOLT OF LIGHTNING...
...SUMMONED INTO EXISTENCE BY THE ECHO OF MIGHTY MJOLNIR...
...AND AUGMENTED BY THE POWER OF THE INHUMAN ELEMENTAL...
KRAKA-BOOOOOM!
...IT STRIKES WITH THE FORCE OF NATURE UNLEASHED...!
AIIIEEEEE!!

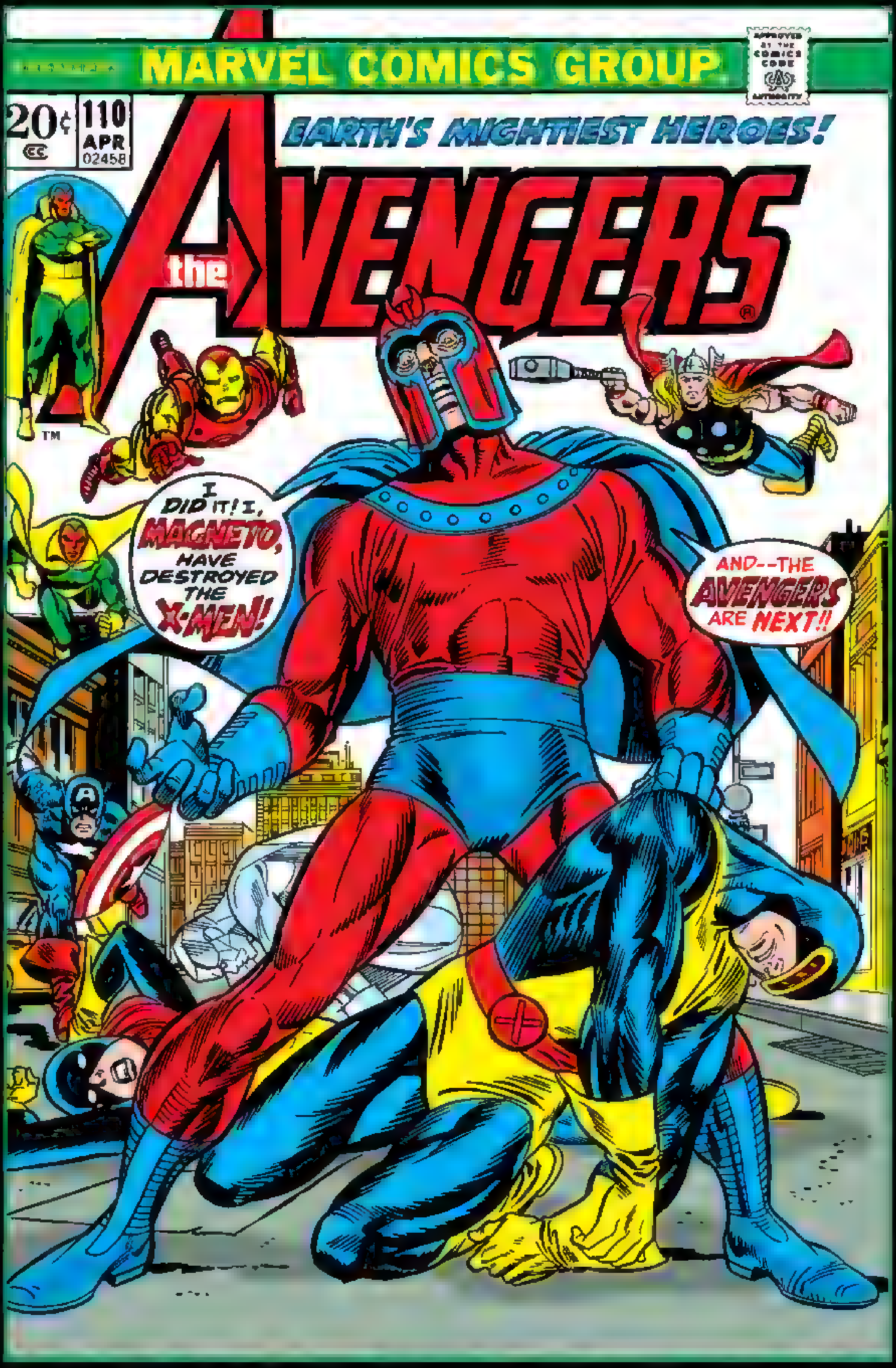

...AND WHERE THERE WAS ONCE TWO FORMS...
...NOW THERE ARE THREE.
SO... I WAS RIGHT!
THOU MAY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO POSSESS THE BODY OF THOR, BROTHER, BUT I DIDST KNOW THE SHOCK OF LIGHTNING WOULD FREE HIM.
FOR ONLY THE CHOSEN GOD OF THUNDER MAY WIELD THE TRUE POWER OF THE URU HAMMER... SUCH IS THE WILL OF ODIN, OUR FATHER'S ALLY.
THY ARROGANCE IS ASTOUNDING, ARES ...AS ALWAYS!
PEACE, HERCULES... THY POINT IS TAKEN.
IT SEEMS AS IF THERE IS INDEED A MIND WITHIN THAT BODY OF BRAWN!
HERA!
ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THIS TRAVESTY AS WELL?
YOU DIDST PUT THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AT RISK... AND FOR WHAT?!
FOR SOMETHING AS PETTY AND MEWLING AS JEALOUSY?
YOU DOTH NOT DESERVE THE NAME OLYMPIANS!
OH, HERCULES, THAT IS RICH, COMING FROM ONE SUCH AS THEE!
NO ONE WAS INJURED, NO LIVES, PATHETIC AND BRIEF AS THEY ARE, WERE LOST...
...CONSIDER THIS A MERE FAMILY DISAGREEMENT. FAREWELL.


SHEESH! AND I THOUGHT I HAD FAMILY PROBLEMS!
ERIC!
MY HEART DOTH SWELL WITH JOY TO SEE THEE RETURNED!
IN TRUTH, WHEN I THOUGHT THEE LOST TO US IN MADNESS, MY SOUL WAS IN DARKEST TORMENT!
Y' KNOW, CRYS, YOU GOTTA LOVE THE BIG LUG!
AND THEE, TAYLOR MADISON...
...HOW CAN I BEG FORGIVENESS FOR THE DANGER MY FAMILY PLACED YOUR YOUNG CHARGES?
I THINK YOU'VE MORE THAN MADE UP FOR THAT, HERCULES.
THAT'S A NASTY CUT THERE. WE BETTER GET SOME BANDAGES ON THAT!
OLYMPUS.
IF ONLY THINGS HAD GONE ACCORDING TO MY PLAN!
IF HE HAD STRUCK ME DOWN WHILS'T I WAS IN THE MORTAL'S BODY...
...IF HE HAD ACTED IN ANGER... HOW SWEET THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN!
BUT YOU, HERA--
--WHAT HAPPENED TO THY PART OF THE WAGER?
YOU ATTEMPTED NOTHING!
OUR PLAN WAS TO BRING PAIN AND GRIEF TO HERCULES, ARES...
...AND IN THAT, I ACQUITTED MYSELF QUITE WELL.
THE PLANS OF HERA ARE DELICATE, SUBTLE THINGS, ARES.
BUT IN THE END, I ALWAYS WIN!
HA HA HA HA HA HA
MORE ON HERA'S REVENGE SOON! BUT FIRST, THE X-MEN PAY A VISIT, ALONG WITH QUICKSILVER AND THE STARJAMMERS... AS THE FALLOUT FROM GALACTIC STORM BEGINS! BE HERE FOR:
REPERCUSSIONS!

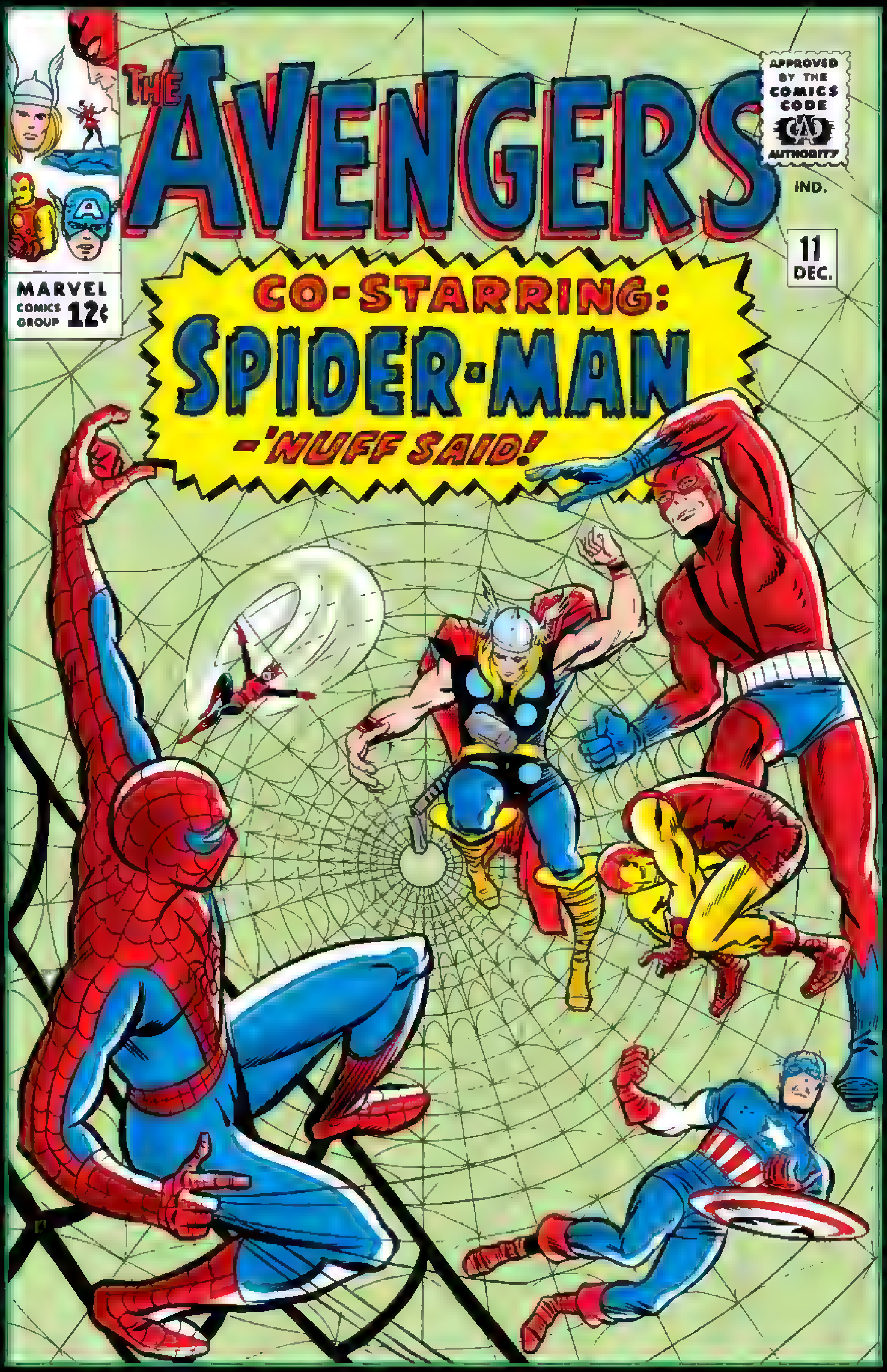
MARVEL COMICS
© 1992 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
$3.80 AUS
350
EARLY NOV
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
64 PAGE 350TH ISSUE SPECTACULAR!
AVENGERS®
THE AVENGERS® VS. THE STARJAMMERS™!
EPTING - PALMER

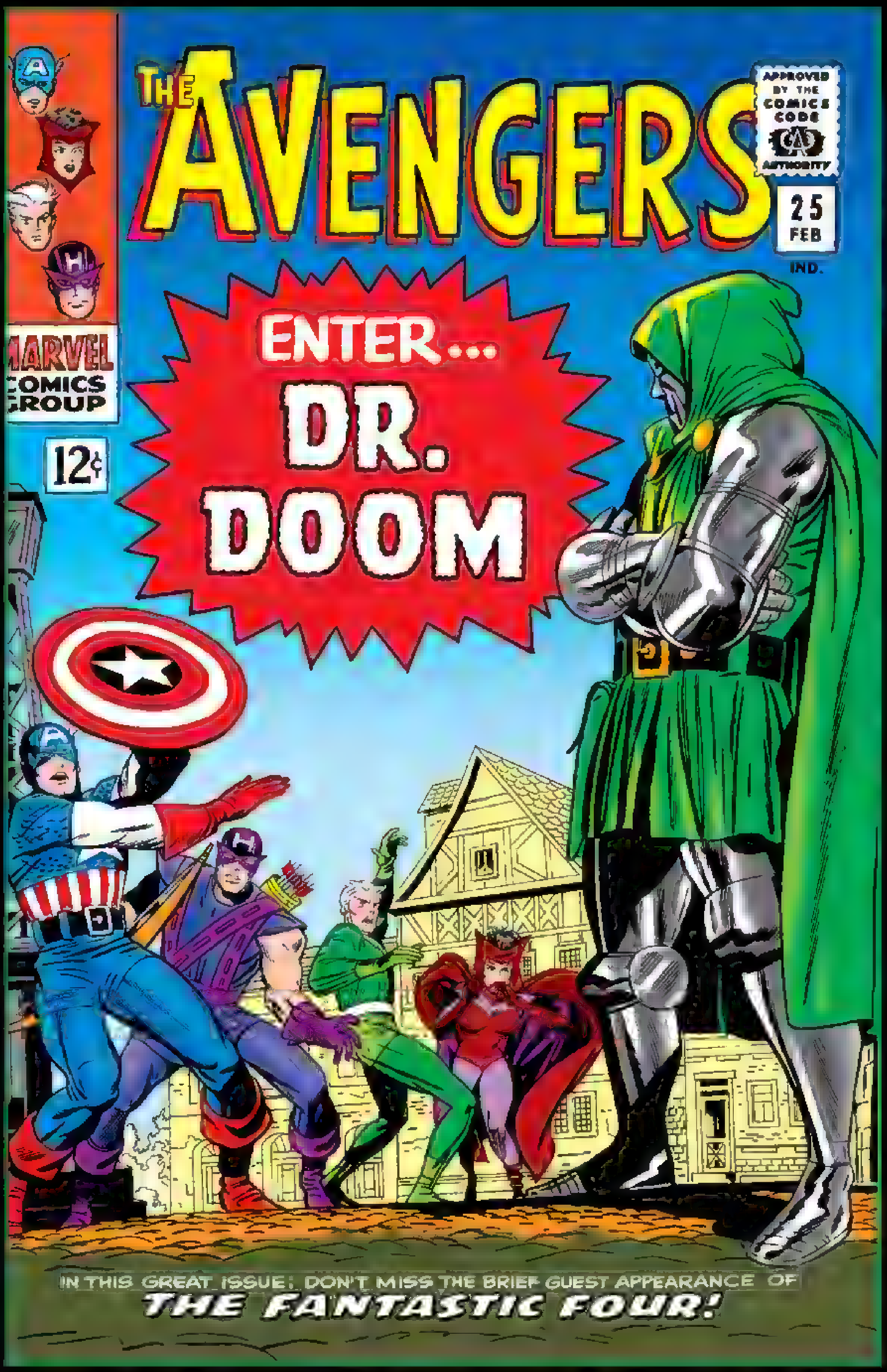

THOR!
ANT MAN!
HULK!
IRON MAN!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
THE AVENGERS
1 SEPT.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST SUPER-HEROES!
CAN THE COMBINED POWER OF THE AVENGERS DEFEAT THE SINISTER SPELLS OF LOKI, GOD OF EVIL?
LOKI! PREPARE FOR BATTLE!
THE AVENGERS... BAH! I'LL DESTROY YOU ALL!
SUPER-HEROES! SUPER-VILLAINS! SUPER-THRILLS! PRESENTED IN THE FABULOUS MARVEL MANNER!

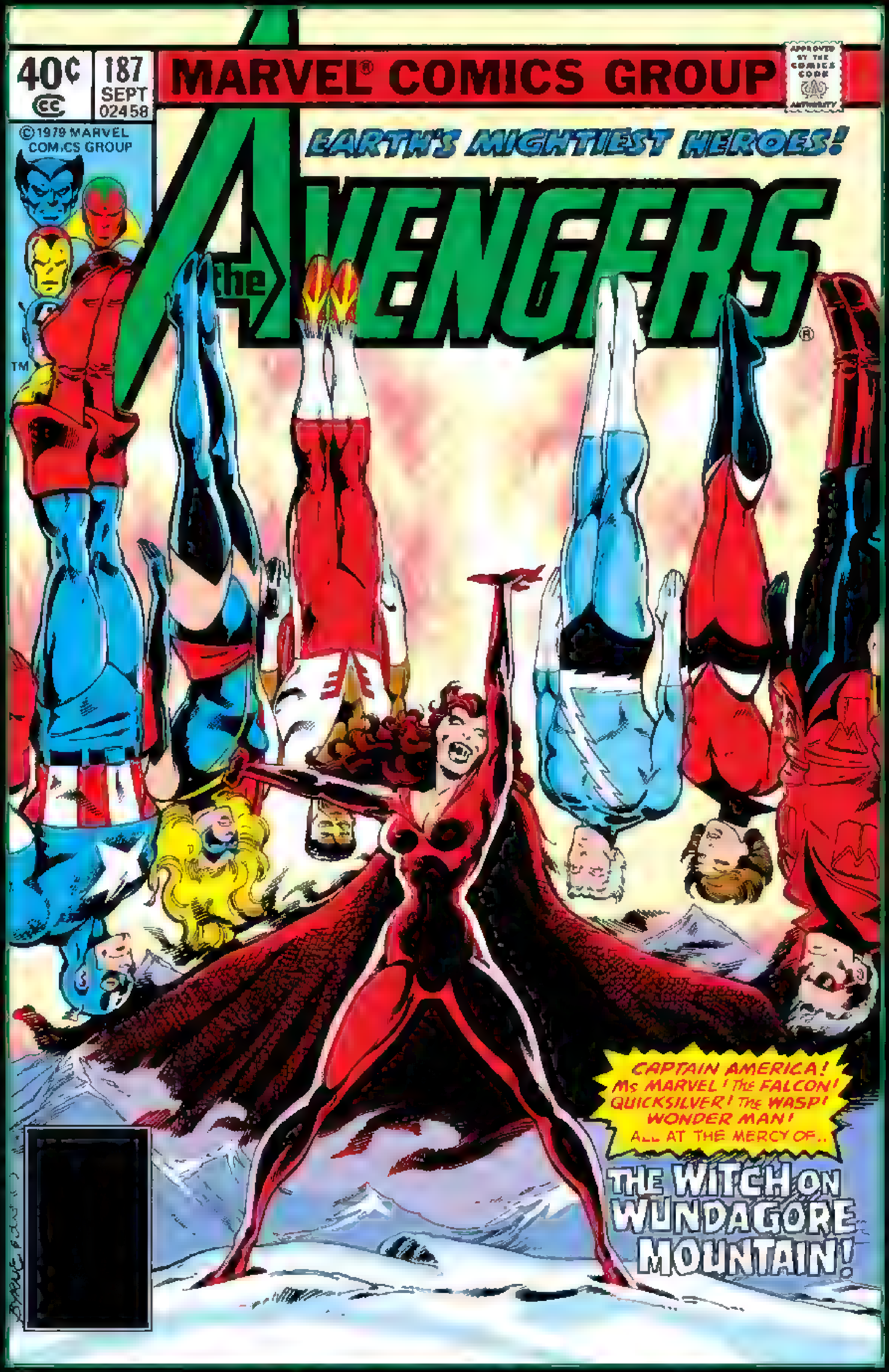

THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ 53 IND JUNE
THE AVENGERS VS. THE X-MEN!
'NUFF SAID!

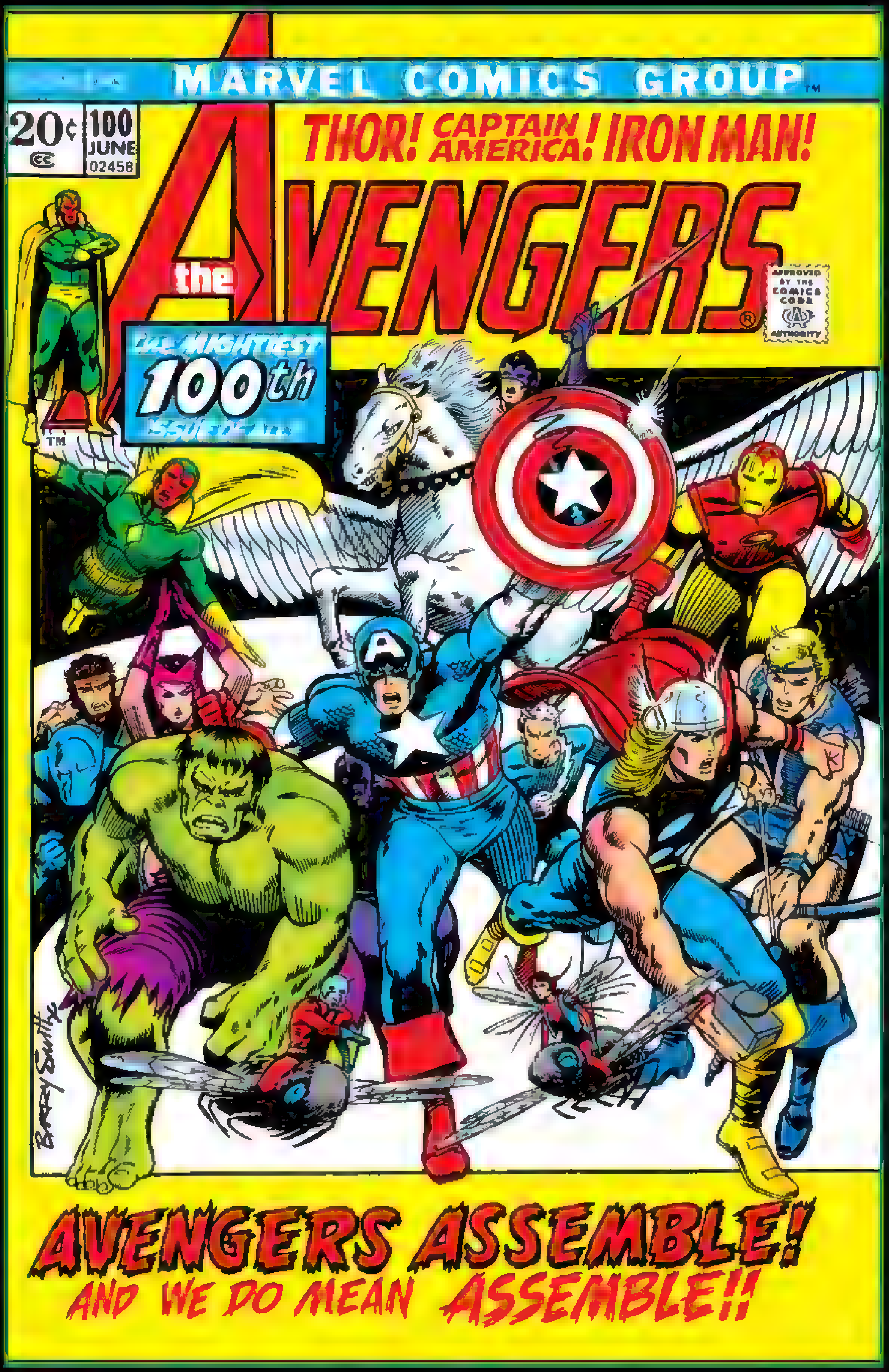

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
20¢ 110 APR 02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
THE AVENGERS
I DID IT! I, MAGNETO, HAVE DESTROYED THE X-MEN!
AND--THE AVENGERS ARE NEXT!!

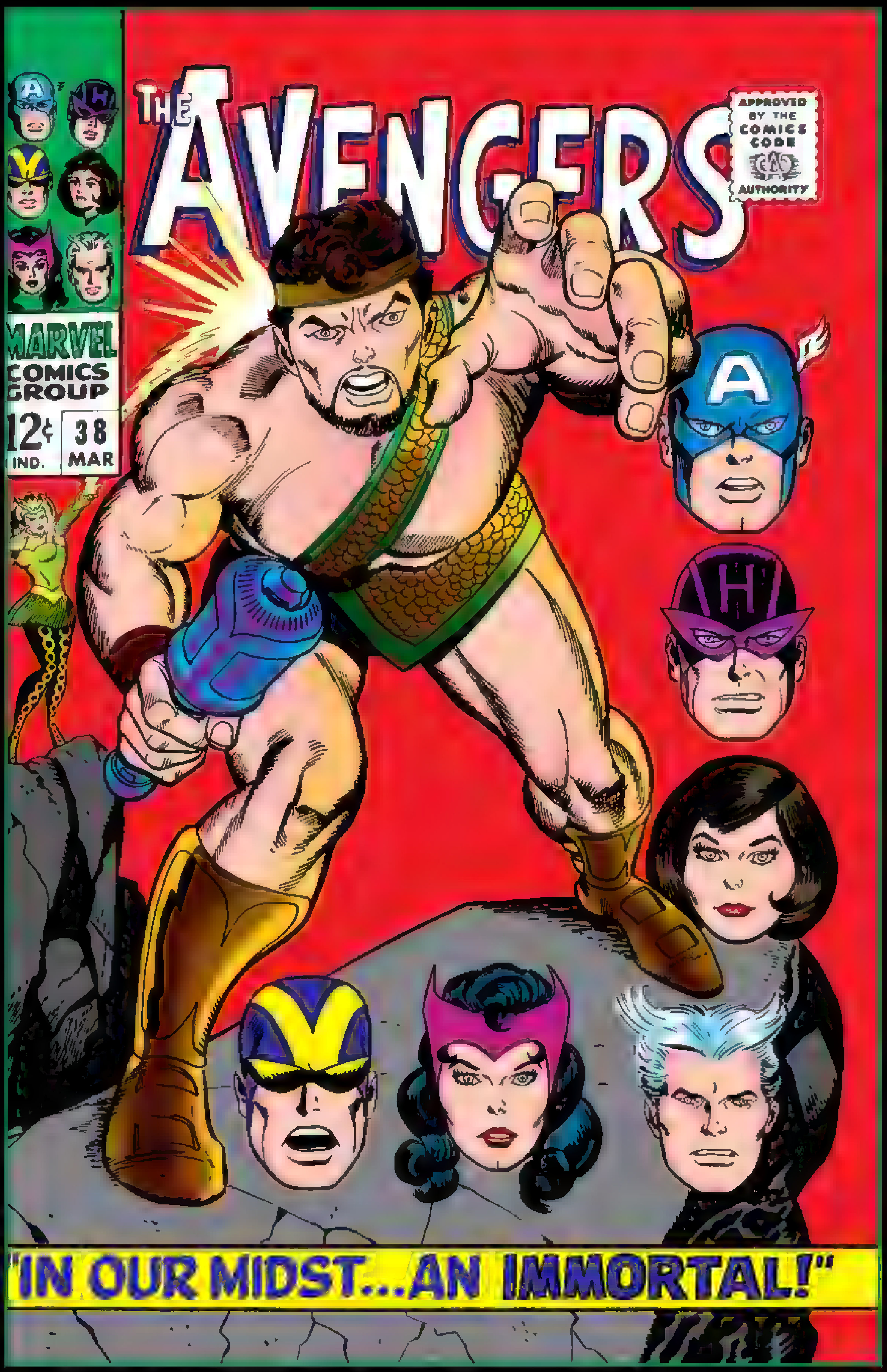
AVENGERS #350'S BACK, INSIDE-FRONT AND INSIDE-BACK COVERS FEATURED VINTAGE *AVENGERS* COVER ART. THE INSIDE COVERS BOTH FOLDED OUT TO SHOWCASE A GALLERY OF MORE COVERS.

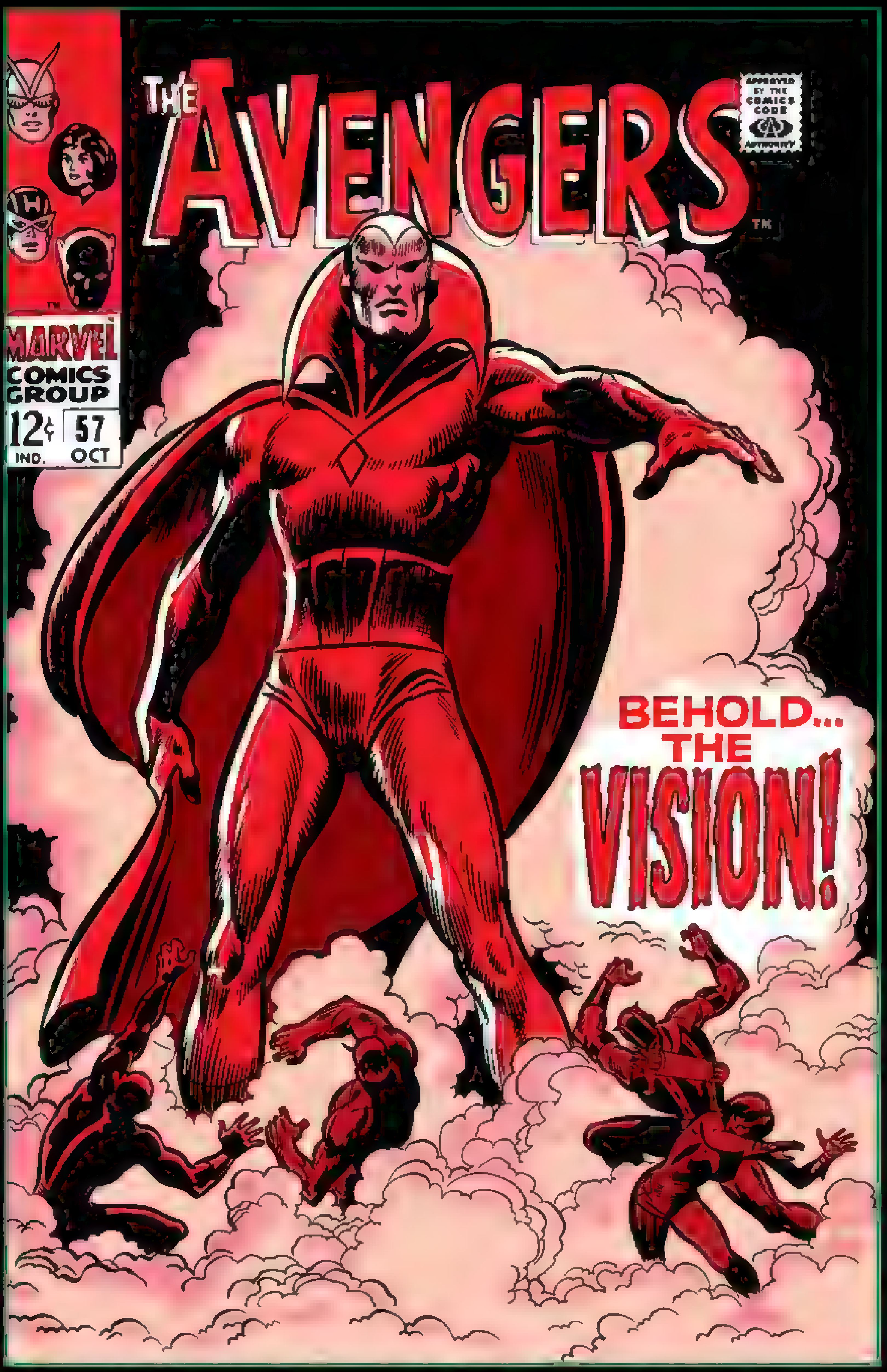

THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
11 DEC.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
CO-STARRING:
SPIDER-MAN
—'NUFF SAID!

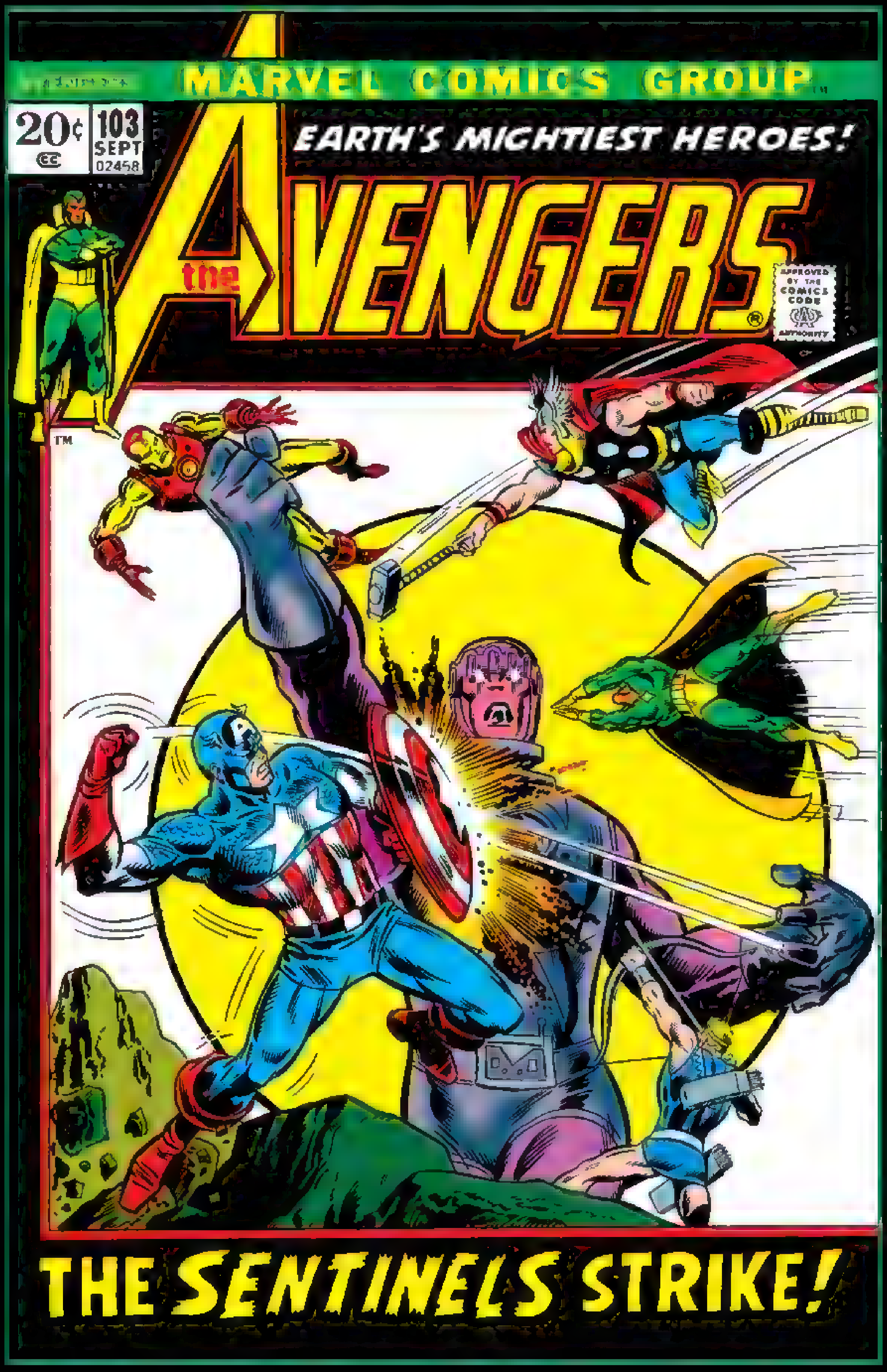

THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25 FEB
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢
ENTER...
DR. DOOM
IN THIS GREAT ISSUE: DON'T MISS THE BRIEF GUEST APPEARANCE OF
THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

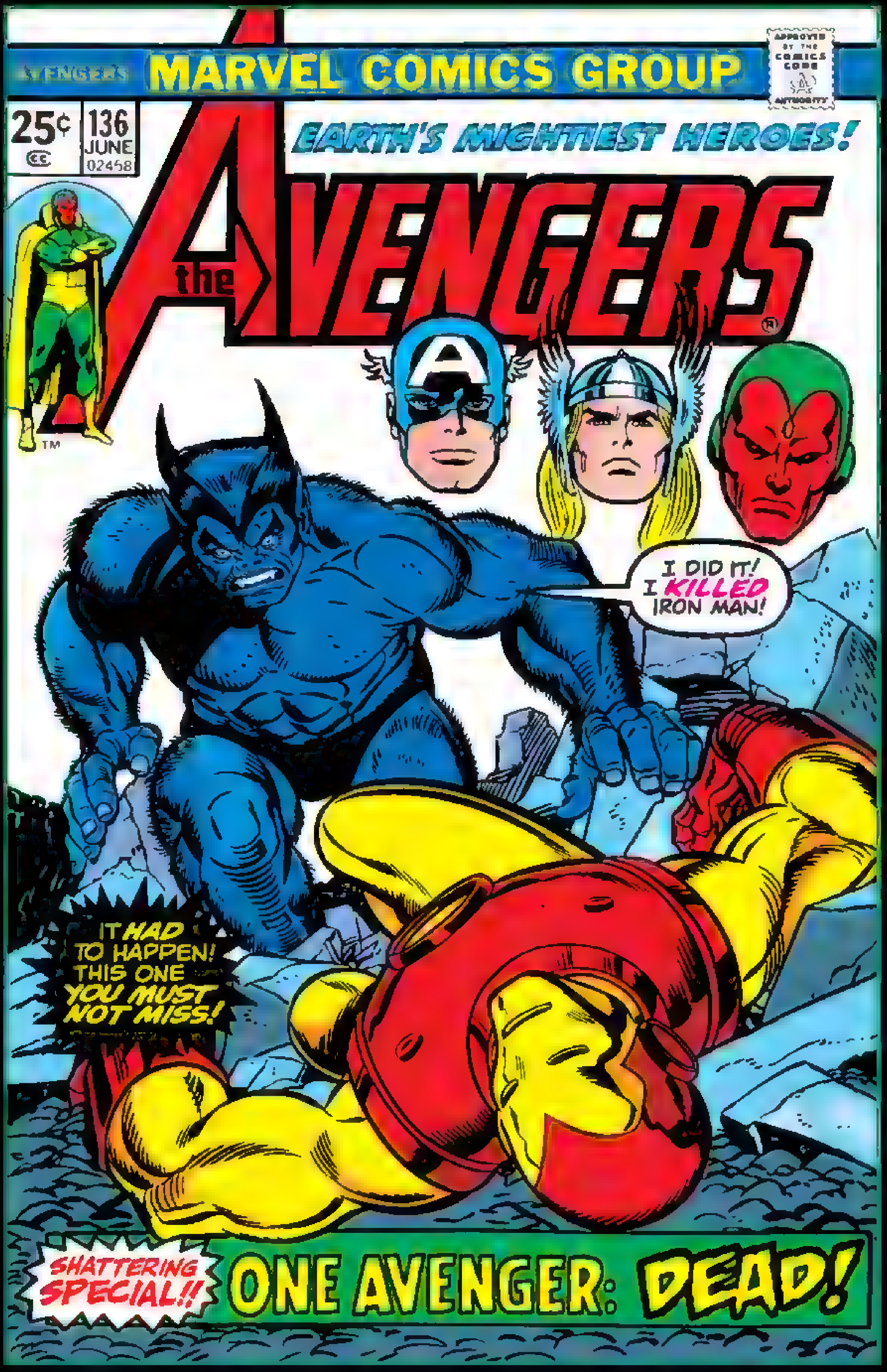

40¢
187 SEPT 02458
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
© 1979 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
CAPTAIN AMERICA! Ms MARVEL! THE FALCON! QUICKSILVER! THE WASP! WONDER MAN! ALL AT THE MERCY OF...
THE WITCH ON WUNDAGORE MOUNTAIN!


MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢
100 JUNE 02458
THOR! CAPTAIN AMERICA! IRON MAN!
the AVENGERS
THE MIGHTIEST 100th ISSUE OF ALL!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BARRY SMITH
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
AND WE DO MEAN ASSEMBLE!!

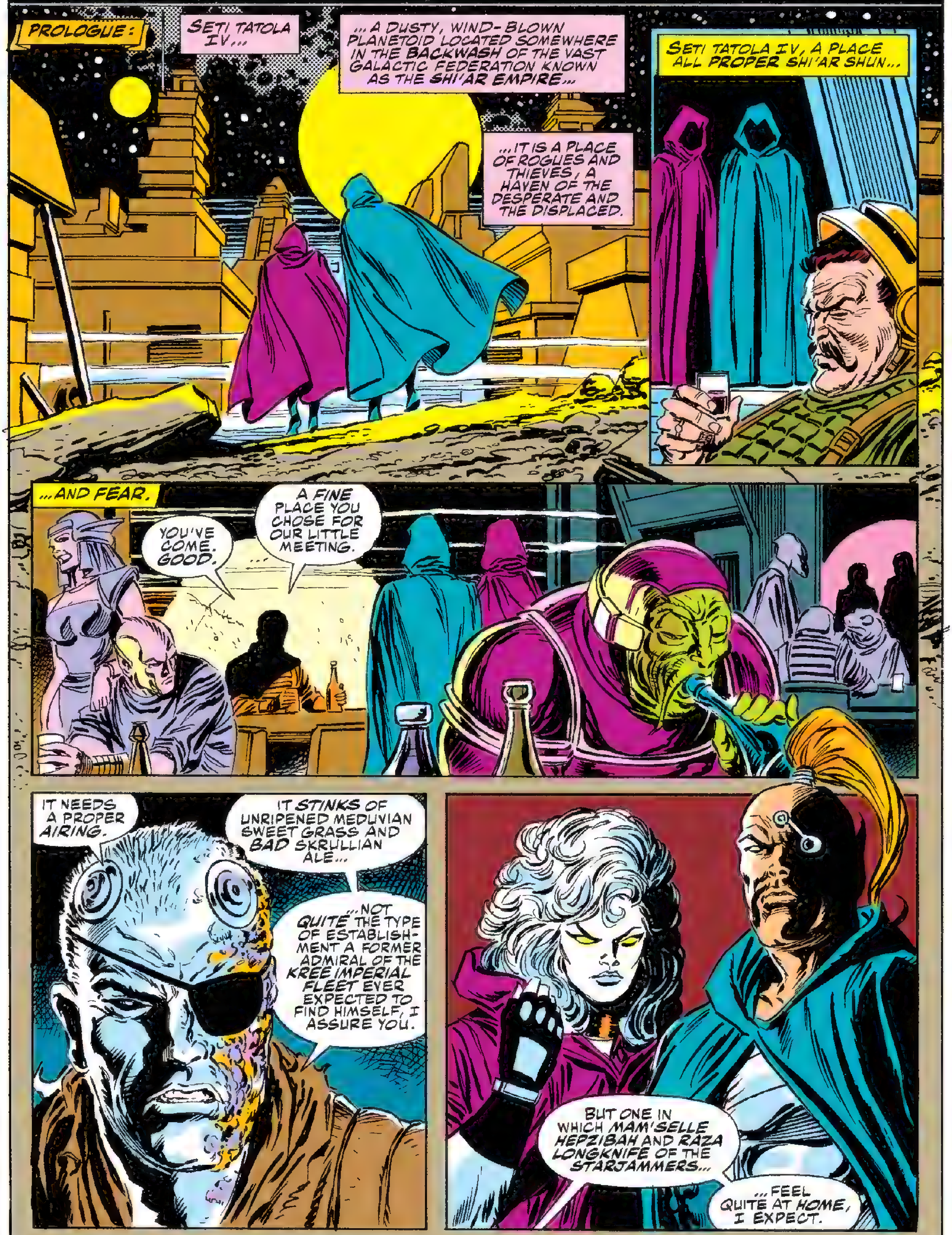

THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ 38 IND. MAR
"IN OUR MIDST...AN IMMORTAL!"

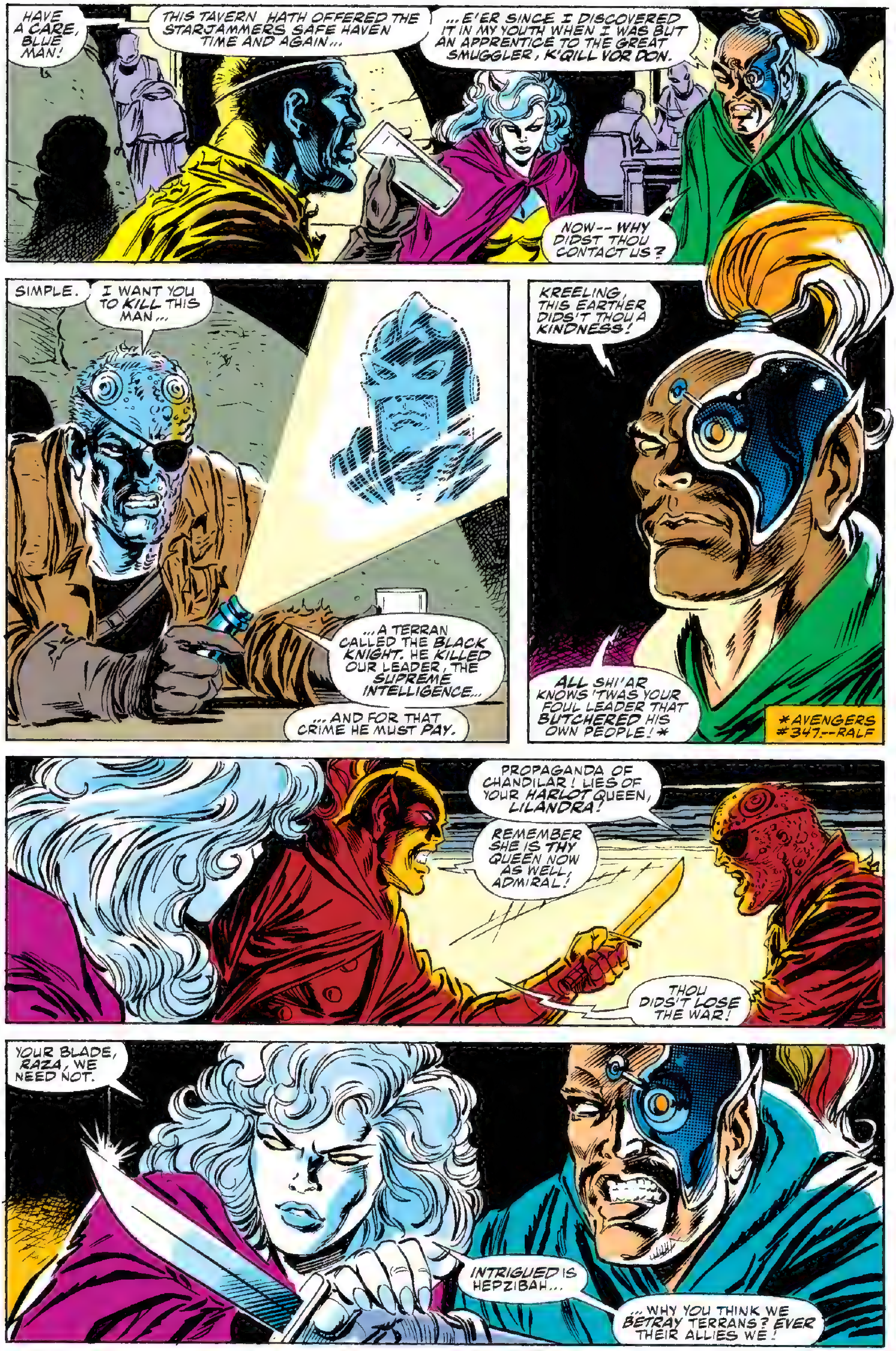

THE AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ 57 IND. OCT
BEHOLD... THE VISION!

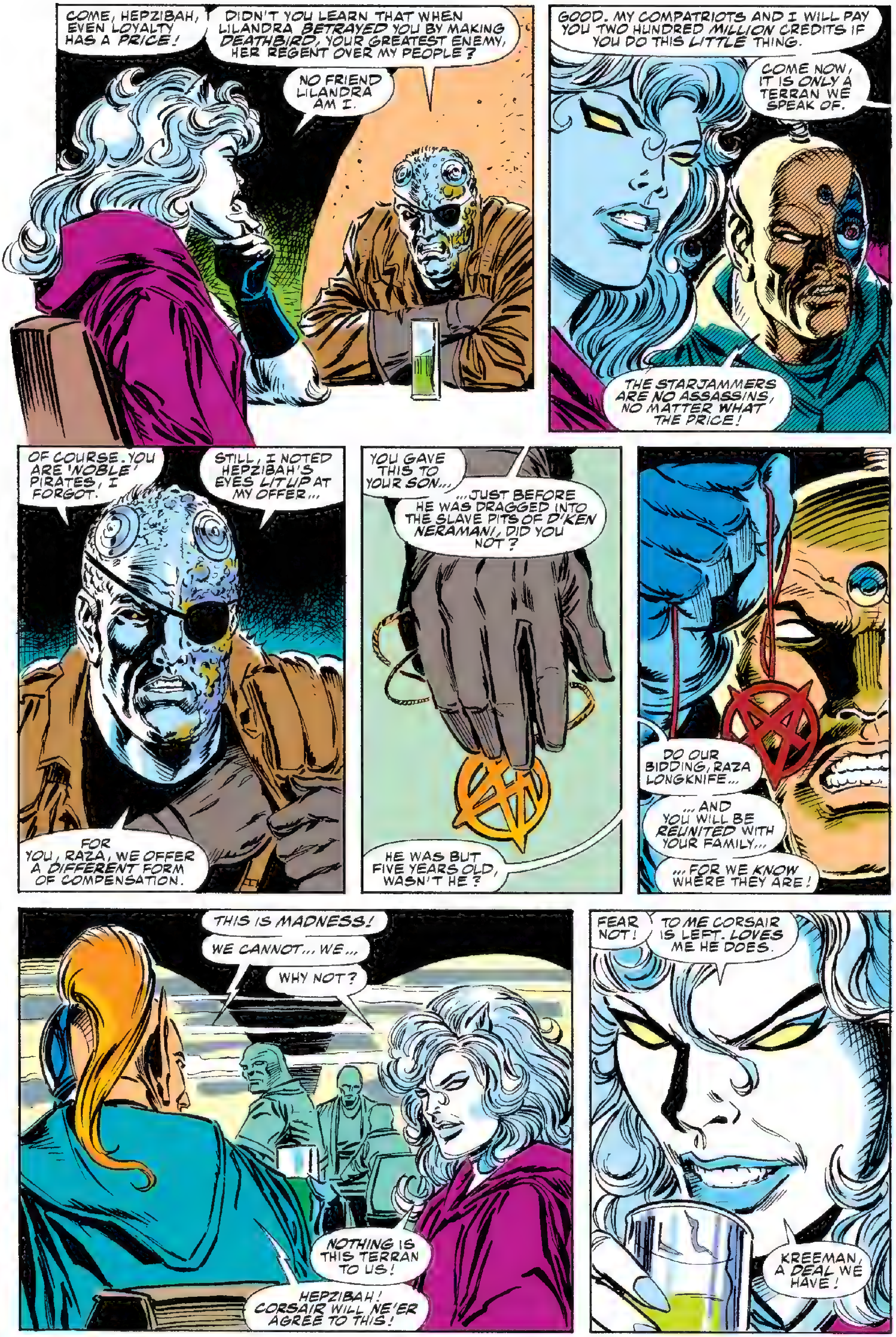

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢ 103 SEPT 02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE SENTINELS STRIKE!

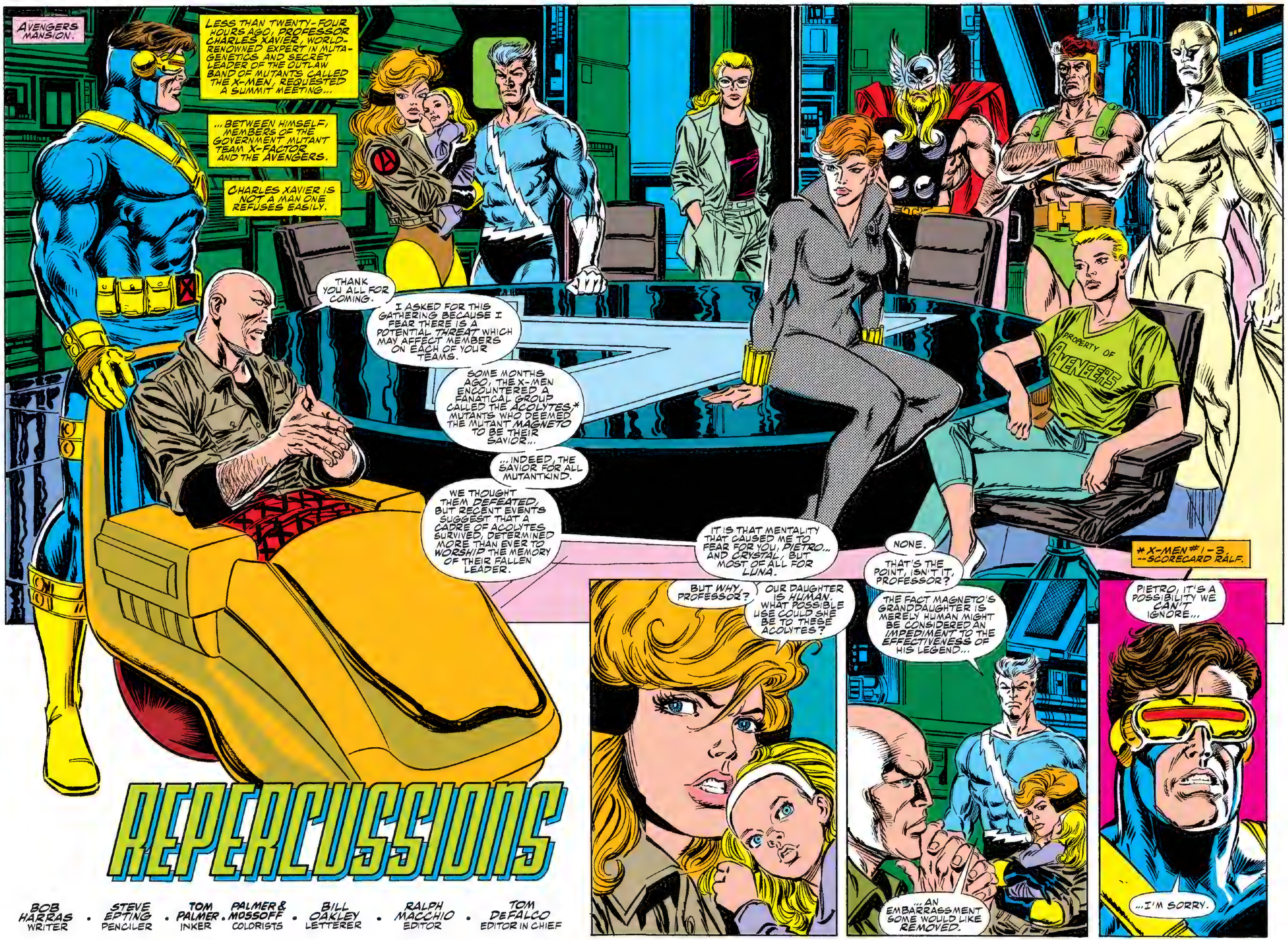

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢ 136 JUNE 02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
I DID IT! I KILLED IRON MAN!
IT HAD TO HAPPEN! THIS ONE YOU MUST NOT MISS!
SHATTERING SPECIAL!!
ONE AVENGER: DEAD!

TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

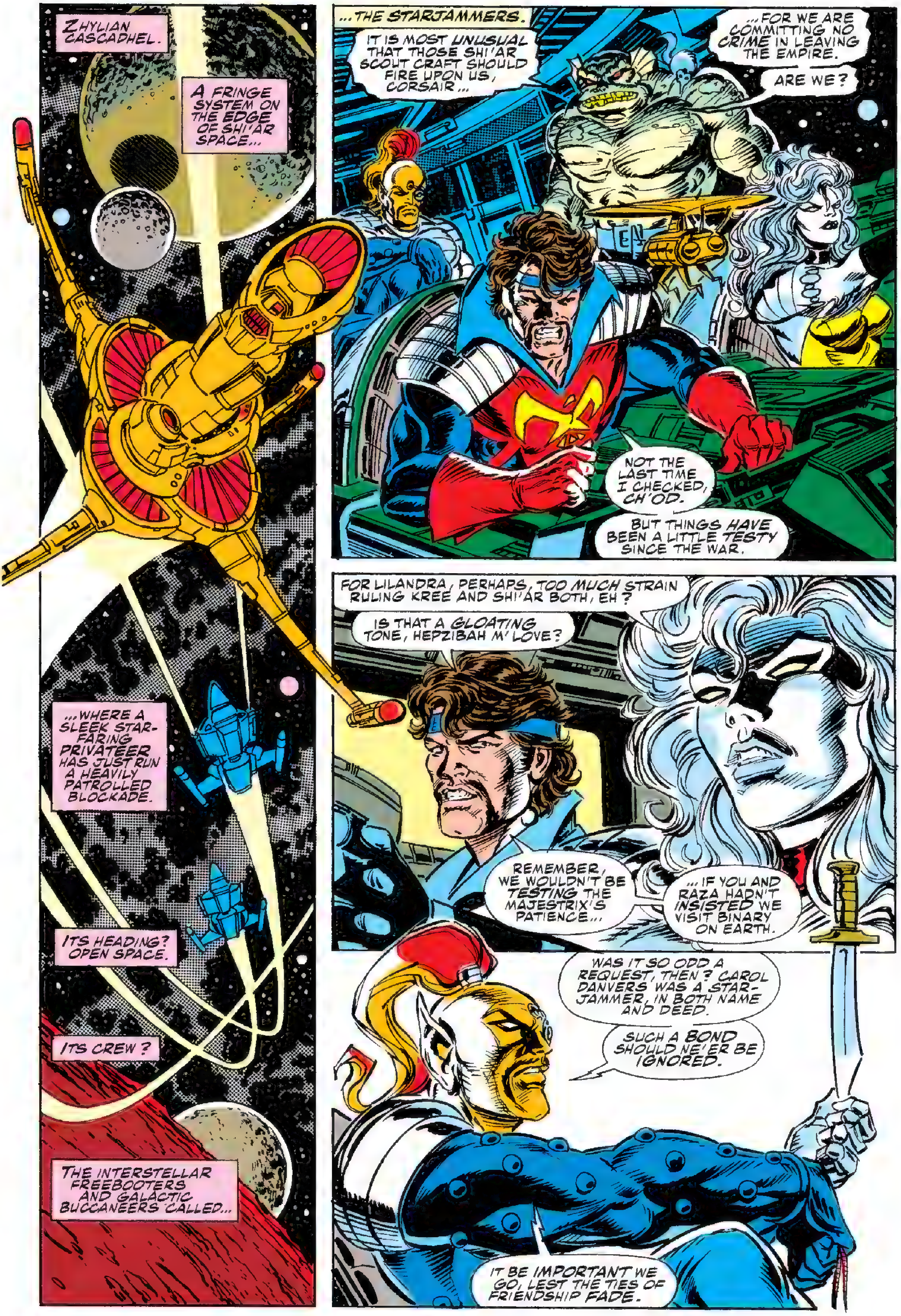

PROLOGUE:
SETI TATOLA IV...
...A DUSTY, WIND-BLOWN PLANETOID LOCATED SOMEWHERE IN THE BACKWASH OF THE VAST GALACTIC FEDERATION KNOWN AS THE SHI'AR EMPIRE...
...IT IS A PLACE OF ROGUES AND THIEVES, A HAVEN OF THE DESPERATE AND THE DISPLACED.
SETI TATOLA IV, A PLACE ALL PROPER SHI'AR SHUN...
...AND FEAR.
YOU'VE COME. GOOD.
A FINE PLACE YOU CHOSE FOR OUR LITTLE MEETING.
IT NEEDS A PROPER AIRING.
IT STINKS OF UNRIPENED MEDUVIAN SWEET GRASS AND BAD SKRULLIAN ALE...
...NOT QUITE THE TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT A FORMER ADMIRAL OF THE KREE IMPERIAL FLEET EXPECTED TO FIND HIMSELF, I ASSURE YOU.
BUT ONE IN WHICH MAM'SELLE HEPZIBAH AND RAZA LONGKNIFE OF THE STARJAMMERS...
...FEEL QUITE AT HOME, I EXPECT.

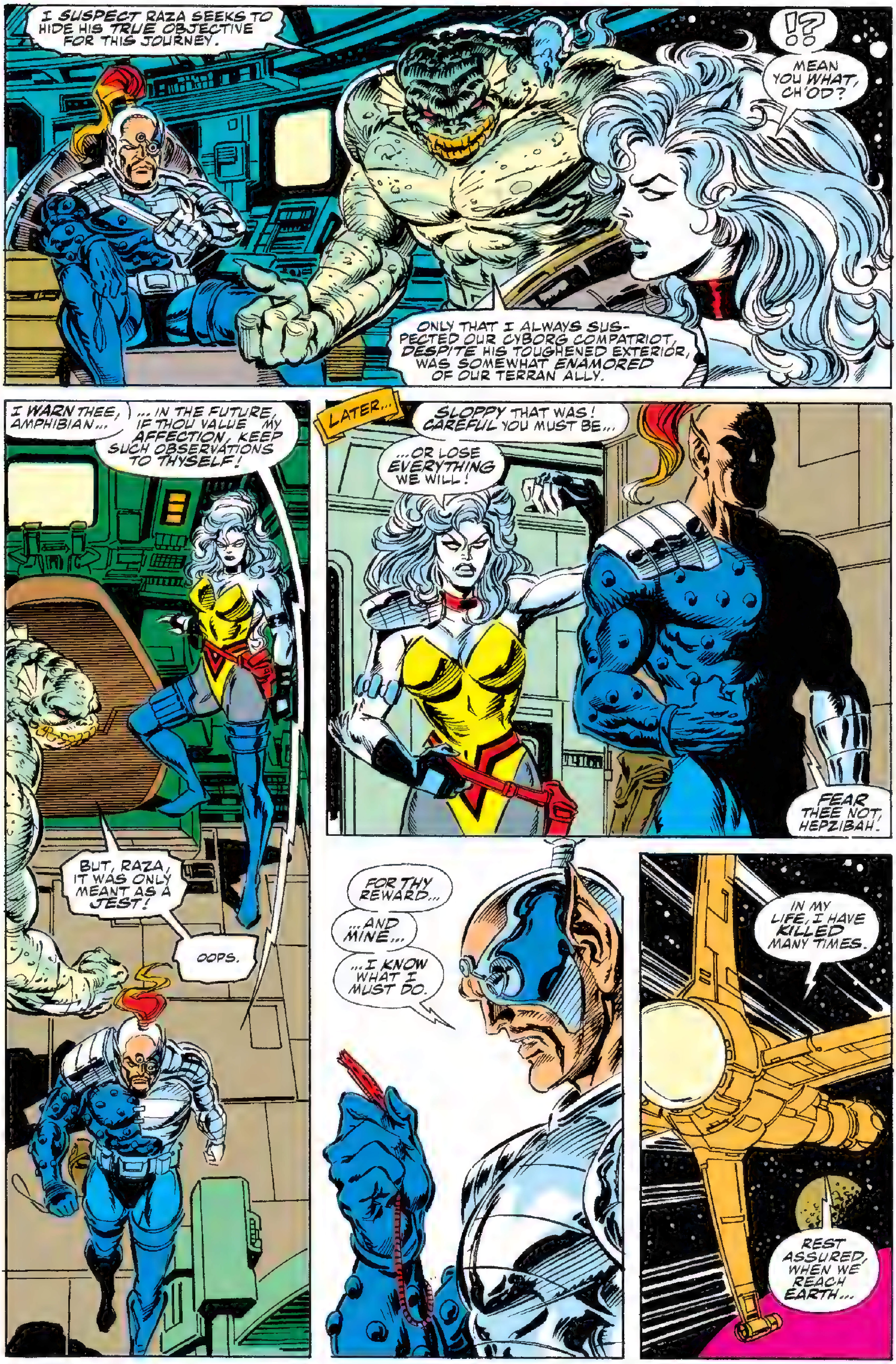

HAVE A CARE, BLUE MAN!
THIS TAVERN HATH OFFERED THE STARJAMMERS SAFE HAVEN TIME AND AGAIN...
...E'ER SINCE I DISCOVERED IT IN MY YOUTH WHEN I WAS BUT AN APPRENTICE TO THE GREAT SMUGGLER, K'QILL VOR DON.
NOW-- WHY DIDST THOU CONTACT US?
SIMPLE.
I WANT YOU TO KILL THIS MAN...
...A TERRAN CALLED THE BLACK KNIGHT. HE KILLED OUR LEADER, THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE...
...AND FOR THAT CRIME HE MUST PAY.
KREELING, THIS EARTHER DIDS'T THOU A KINDNESS!
ALL SHI'AR KNOWS 'TWAS YOUR FOUL LEADER THAT BUTCHERED HIS OWN PEOPLE! *
*AVENGERS #347.--RALF
PROPAGANDA OF CHANDILAR! LIES OF YOUR HARLOT QUEEN, LILANDRA!
REMEMBER SHE IS THY QUEEN NOW AS WELL, ADMIRAL!
THOU DIDS'T LOSE THE WAR!
YOUR BLADE, RAZA, WE NEED NOT.
INTRIGUED IS HEPZIBAH...
...WHY YOU THINK WE BETRAY TERRANS? EVER THEIR ALLIES WE!

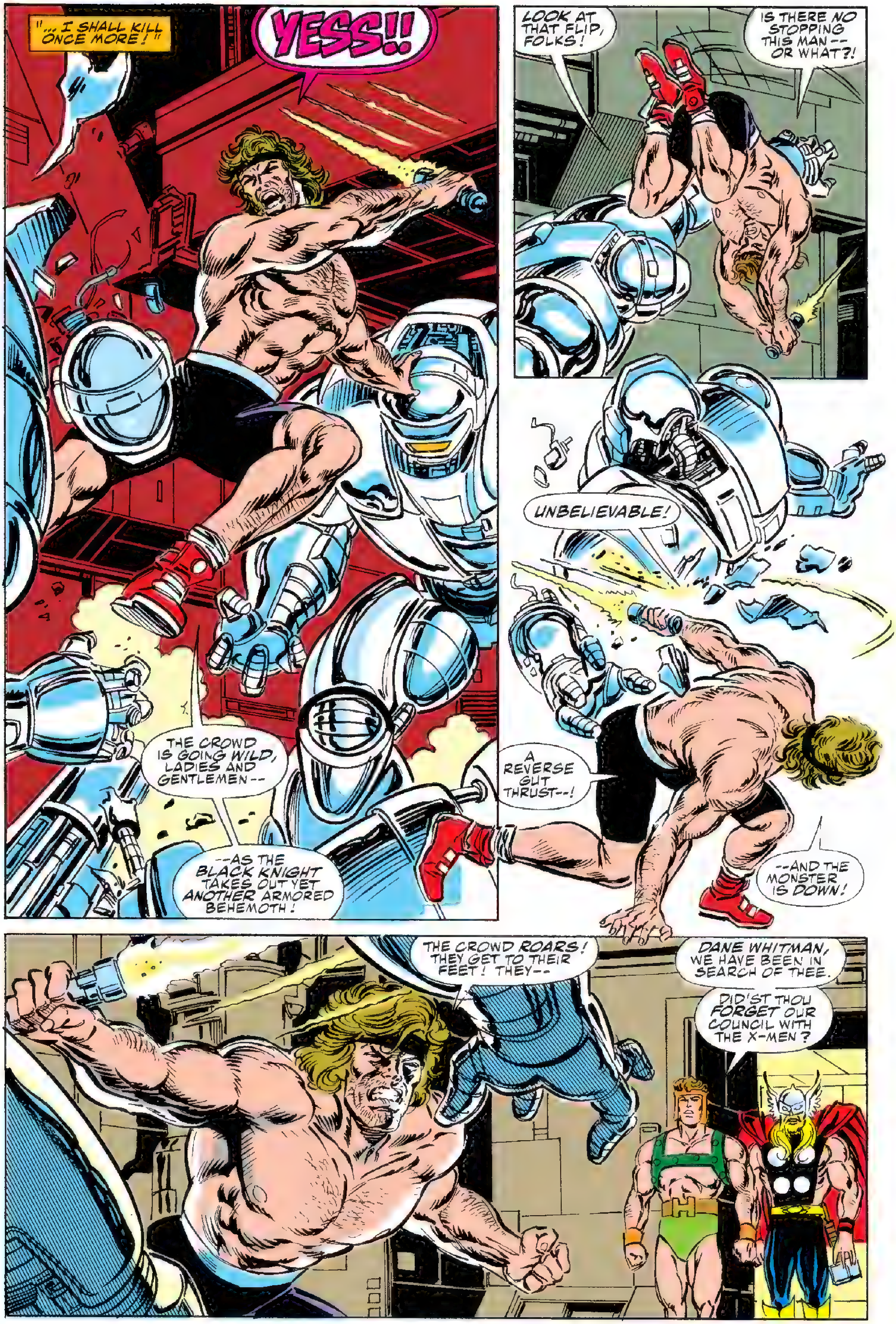

COME, HEPZIBAH, EVEN LOYALTY HAS A *PRICE*!
DIDN'T YOU LEARN THAT WHEN LILANDRA *BETRAYED* YOU BY MAKING *DEATHBIRD*, YOUR GREATEST ENEMY, HER REGENT OVER MY PEOPLE?
NO FRIEND LILANDRA AM I.
GOOD. MY COMPATRIOTS AND I WILL PAY YOU TWO HUNDRED *MILLION* CREDITS IF YOU DO THIS *LITTLE* THING.
COME NOW, IT IS *ONLY* A TERRAN WE SPEAK OF.
THE STARJAMMERS ARE NO ASSASSINS, NO MATTER WHAT THE PRICE!
OF COURSE. YOU ARE *'NOBLE'* PIRATES, I FORGOT.
STILL, I NOTED HEPZIBAH'S EYES *LIT UP* AT MY OFFER...
FOR YOU, RAZA, WE OFFER A *DIFFERENT* FORM OF COMPENSATION.
YOU GAVE THIS TO YOUR SON...
...JUST BEFORE HE WAS DRAGGED INTO THE SLAVE PITS OF *D'KEN NERAMANI*, DID YOU NOT?
HE WAS BUT FIVE YEARS OLD, WASN'T HE?
DO OUR BIDDING, RAZA LONGKNIFE...
...AND YOU WILL BE *REUNITED* WITH YOUR FAMILY...
...FOR WE *KNOW* WHERE THEY ARE!
THIS IS MADNESS!
WE CANNOT... WE...
WHY NOT?
NOTHING IS THIS TERRAN TO US!
HEPZIBAH! CORSAIR WILL NE'ER AGREE TO THIS!
FEAR NOT!
TO ME CORSAIR IS LEFT. *LOVES* ME HE DOES.
KREEMAN, A *DEAL* WE HAVE!

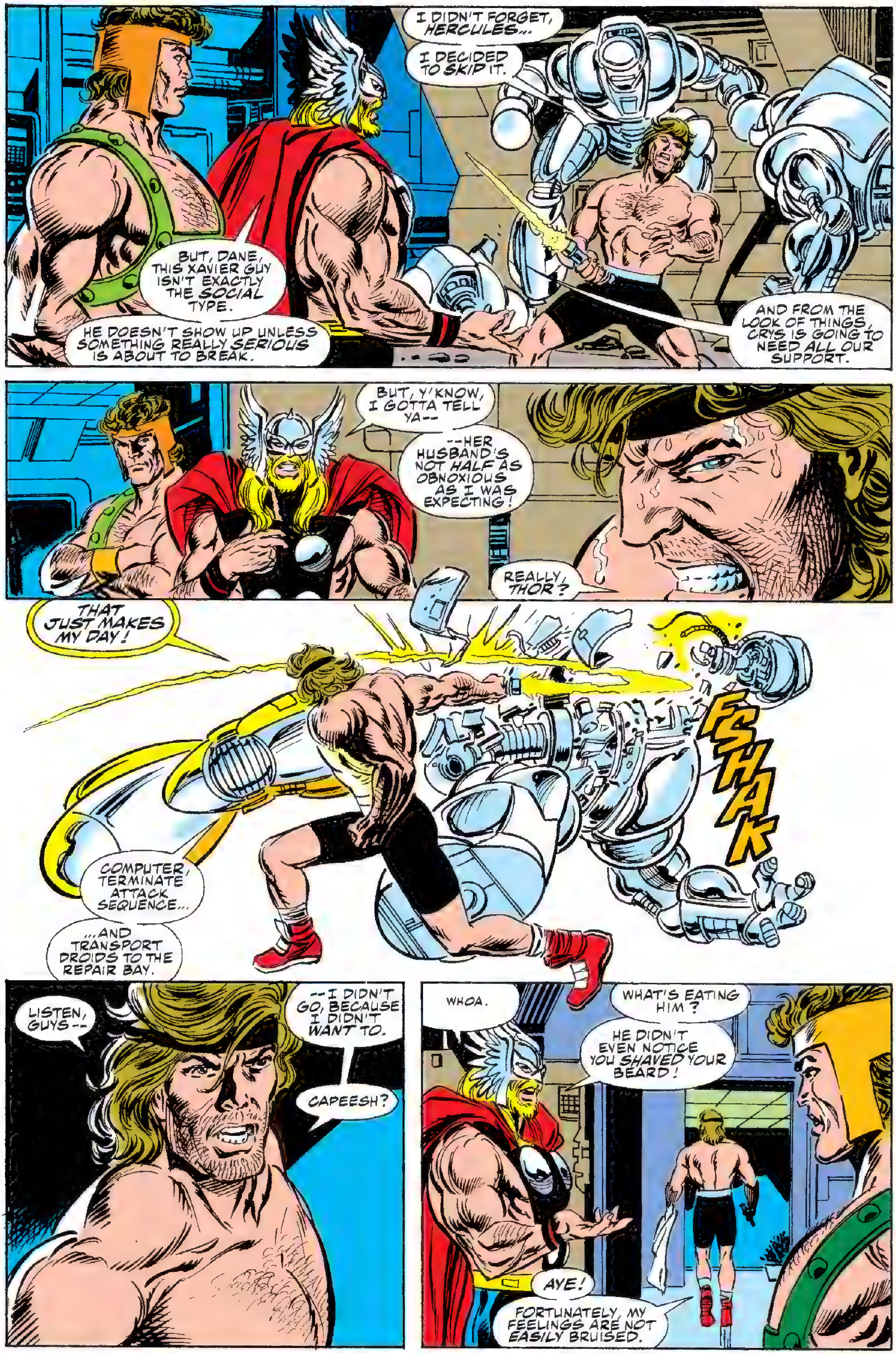

AVENGERS MANSION.
LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AGO, PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER, WORLD-RENOWNED EXPERT IN MUTAGENETICS AND SECRET LEADER OF THE OUTLAW BAND OF MUTANTS CALLED THE X-MEN, REQUESTED A SUMMIT MEETING...
...BETWEEN HIMSELF, MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT MUTANT TEAM X-FACTOR AND THE AVENGERS.
CHARLES XAVIER IS NOT A MAN ONE REFUSES EASILY.
THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING.
I ASKED FOR THIS GATHERING BECAUSE I FEAR THERE IS A POTENTIAL THREAT WHICH MAY AFFECT MEMBERS ON EACH OF YOUR TEAMS.
SOME MONTHS AGO, THE X-MEN ENCOUNTERED A FANATICAL GROUP CALLED THE ACOLYTES,* MUTANTS WHO DEEMED THE MUTANT MAGNETO TO BE THEIR SAVIOR...
...INDEED, THE SAVIOR FOR ALL MUTANTKIND.
WE THOUGHT THEM DEFEATED, BUT RECENT EVENTS SUGGEST THAT A CADRE OF ACOLYTES SURVIVED, DETERMINED MORE THAN EVER TO WORSHIP THE MEMORY OF THEIR FALLEN LEADER.
PROPERTY OF AVENGERS
IT IS THAT MENTALITY THAT CAUSED ME TO FEAR FOR YOU, PIETRO... AND CRYSTAL, BUT MOST OF ALL FOR LUNA.
*X-MEN #1-3. --SCORECARD RALF.
REPERCUSSIONS
BOB HARRAS WRITER • STEVE EPTING PENCILER • TOM PALMER INKER • PALMER & MOSSOFF COLORISTS • BILL OAKLEY LETTERER • RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR • TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF
BUT WHY, PROFESSOR?
OUR DAUGHTER IS HUMAN. WHAT POSSIBLE USE COULD SHE BE TO THESE ACOLYTES?
NONE.
THAT'S THE POINT, ISN'T IT, PROFESSOR?
THE FACT MAGNETO'S GRANDDAUGHTER IS MERELY HUMAN MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HIS LEGEND...
...AN EMBARRASSMENT SOME WOULD LIKE REMOVED.
PIETRO, IT'S A POSSIBILITY WE CAN'T IGNORE...
...I'M SORRY.

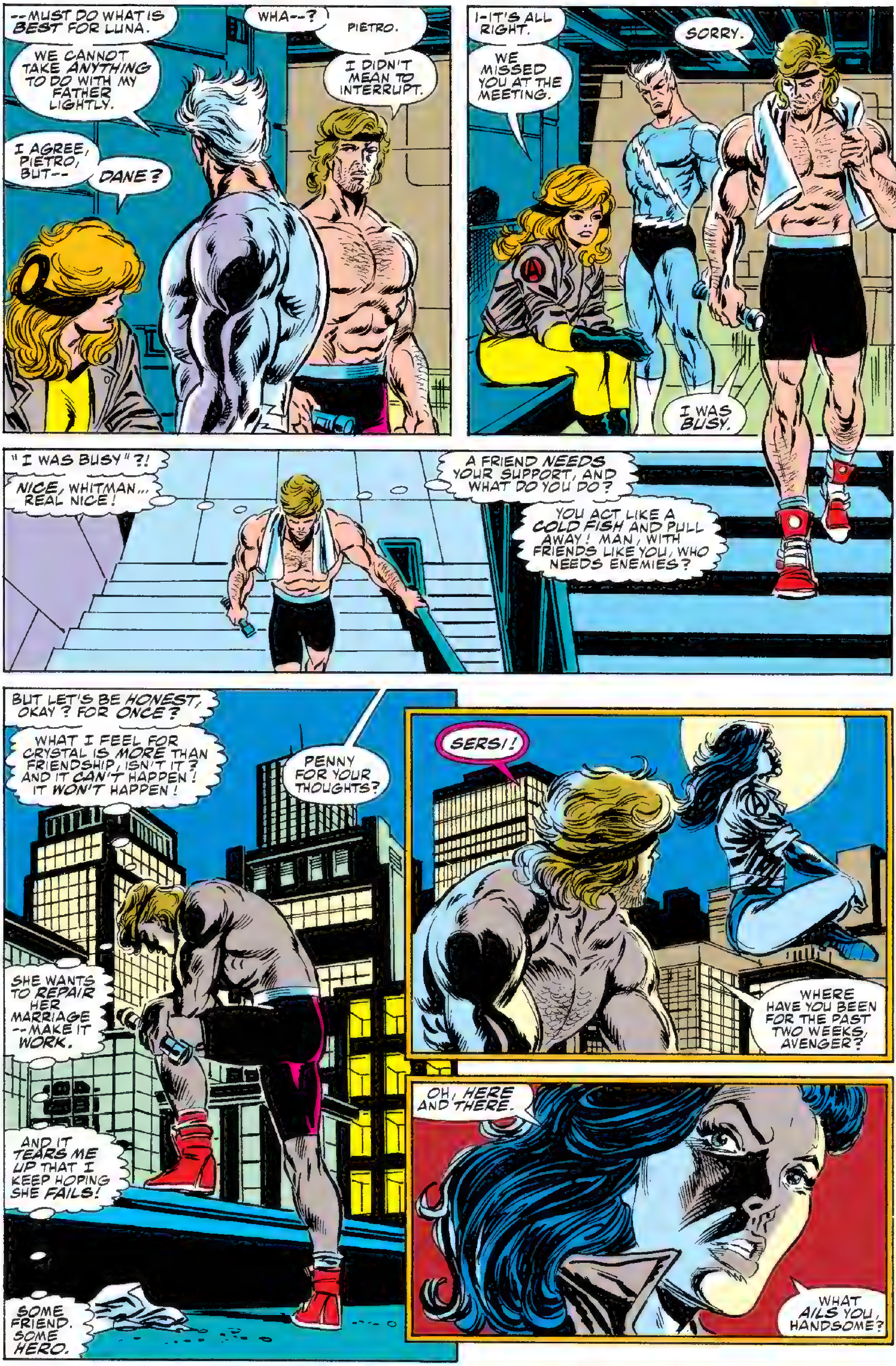
THE ACOLYTES HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE THEY HIJACKED THE SPACE ORBITER, BUT...
...CHARLES, PERHAPS IT'S TIME WE DISCLOSED THE INFORMATION THE BUREAU OF MUTANT AFFAIRS RECEIVED.
PROPER
I QUITE AGREE, VAL.
THE DATA DR. COOPER REFERS TO WAS DELIVERED TO THE B.M.A. YESTERDAY BY PERSONS UNKNOWN...
...AND CONFIRMED RUMORS THAT HAD COME TO ME INDICATING THAT THE ACOLYTES HAD INDEED RESURFACED.
CYCLOPS, MAY I HAVE THE DISC, PLEASE?
BEWARE, HUMANS! HIS SACRIFICE WILL NOT BE IN VAIN!
THE PURITY OF HIS MUTANT LEGACY WILL END
AVENGERS-- BEHOLD THE MAN.
MAGNETO, THE LATE MASTER OF MAGNETISM.
THE PURITY OF HIS LEGACY? HOW I WISH I'D NEVER LEARNED MAGNETO WAS MY FATHER!
AVENGERS, PROFESSOR, IF YOU'D EXCUSE US--
--MY WIFE AND I HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS.
OF COURSE.
AT LEAST THERE IS ONE BRIGHT SPOT TO THIS DAY...
...I HEAR YOU'RE FULLY RECOVERED, BINARY!
CHARLES...
...THERE ARE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT--
--LILANDRA.
I SENSE HER IN YOUR THOUGHTS.
COME, LET US SPEAK IN PRIVATE.

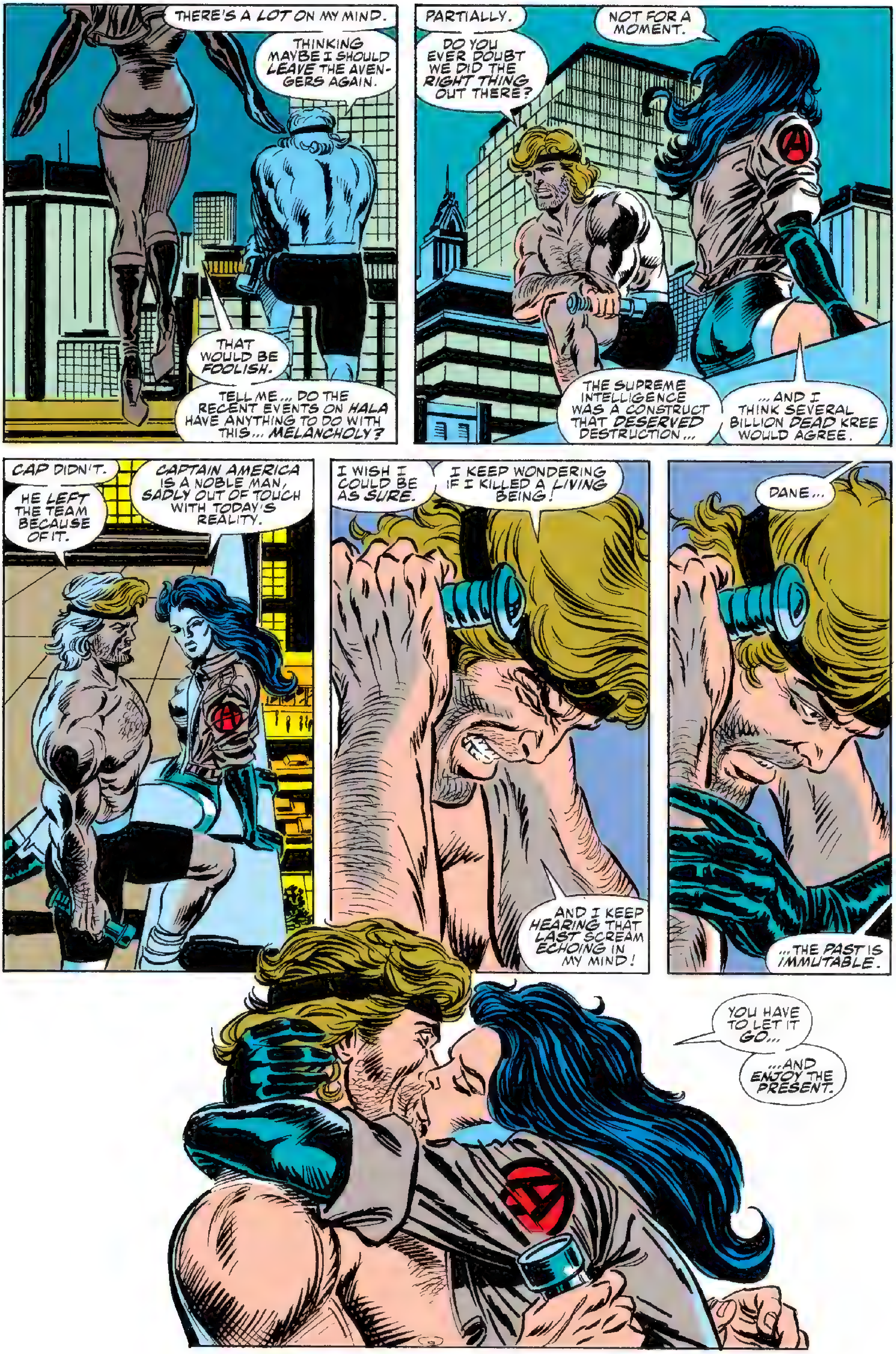

ZHYLIAN CASCADHEL.
A FRINGE SYSTEM ON THE EDGE OF SHI'AR SPACE...
...WHERE A SLEEK STAR-FARING PRIVATEER HAS JUST RUN A HEAVILY PATROLLED BLOCKADE.
ITS HEADING? OPEN SPACE.
ITS CREW?
THE INTERSTELLAR FREEBOOTERS AND GALACTIC BUCCANEERS CALLED...
...THE STARJAMMERS.
IT IS MOST UNUSUAL THAT THOSE SHI'AR SCOUT CRAFT SHOULD FIRE UPON US, CORSAIR...
...FOR WE ARE COMMITTING NO CRIME IN LEAVING THE EMPIRE.
ARE WE?
NOT THE LAST TIME I CHECKED, CH'OD.
BUT THINGS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE TESTY SINCE THE WAR.
FOR LILANDRA, PERHAPS, TOO MUCH STRAIN RULING KREE AND SHI'AR BOTH, EH?
IS THAT A GLOATING TONE, HEPZIBAH M' LOVE?
REMEMBER, WE WOULDN'T BE TESTING THE MAJESTRIX'S PATIENCE...
...IF YOU AND RAZA HADN'T INSISTED WE VISIT BINARY ON EARTH.
WAS IT SO ODD A REQUEST, THEN? CAROL DANVERS WAS A STAR-JAMMER, IN BOTH NAME AND DEED.
SUCH A BOND SHOULD NE'ER BE IGNORED.
IT BE IMPORTANT WE GO, LEST THE TIES OF FRIENDSHIP FADE.

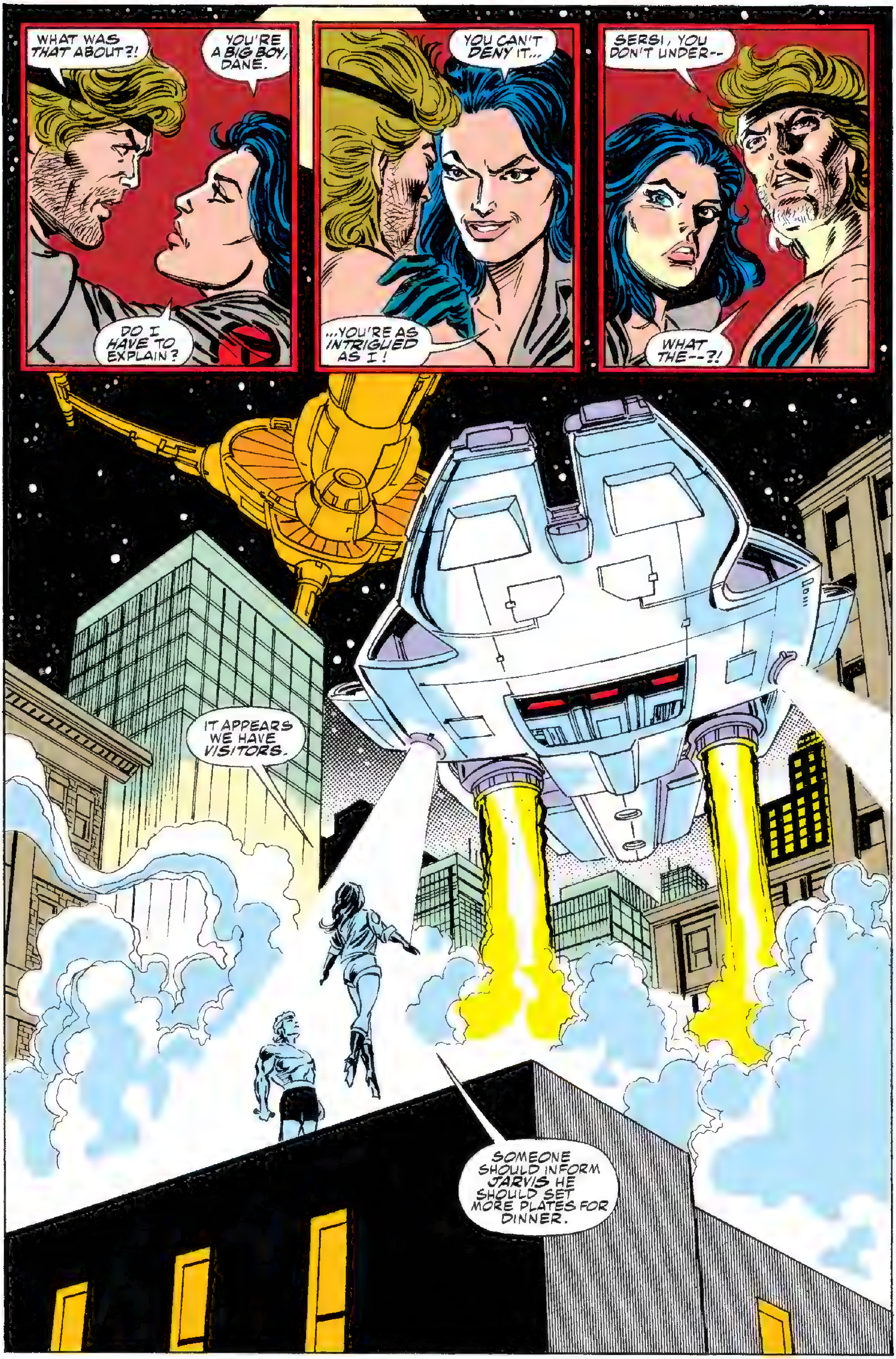

I SUSPECT RAZA SEEKS TO HIDE HIS TRUE OBJECTIVE FOR THIS JOURNEY.
!?
MEAN YOU WHAT, CH'OD?
ONLY THAT I ALWAYS SUSPECTED OUR CYBORG COMPATRIOT, DESPITE HIS TOUGHENED EXTERIOR, WAS SOMEWHAT ENAMORED OF OUR TERRAN ALLY.
I WARN THEE, AMPHIBIAN...
...IN THE FUTURE, IF THOU VALUE MY AFFECTION, KEEP SUCH OBSERVATIONS TO THYSELF!
BUT, RAZA, IT WAS ONLY MEANT AS A JEST!
OOPS.
LATER...
SLOPPY THAT WAS! CAREFUL YOU MUST BE...
...OR LOSE EVERYTHING WE WILL!
FEAR THEE NOT, HEPZIBAH!
FOR THY REWARD...
...AND MINE...
...I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO.
IN MY LIFE, I HAVE KILLED MANY TIMES.
REST ASSURED, WHEN WE REACH EARTH...

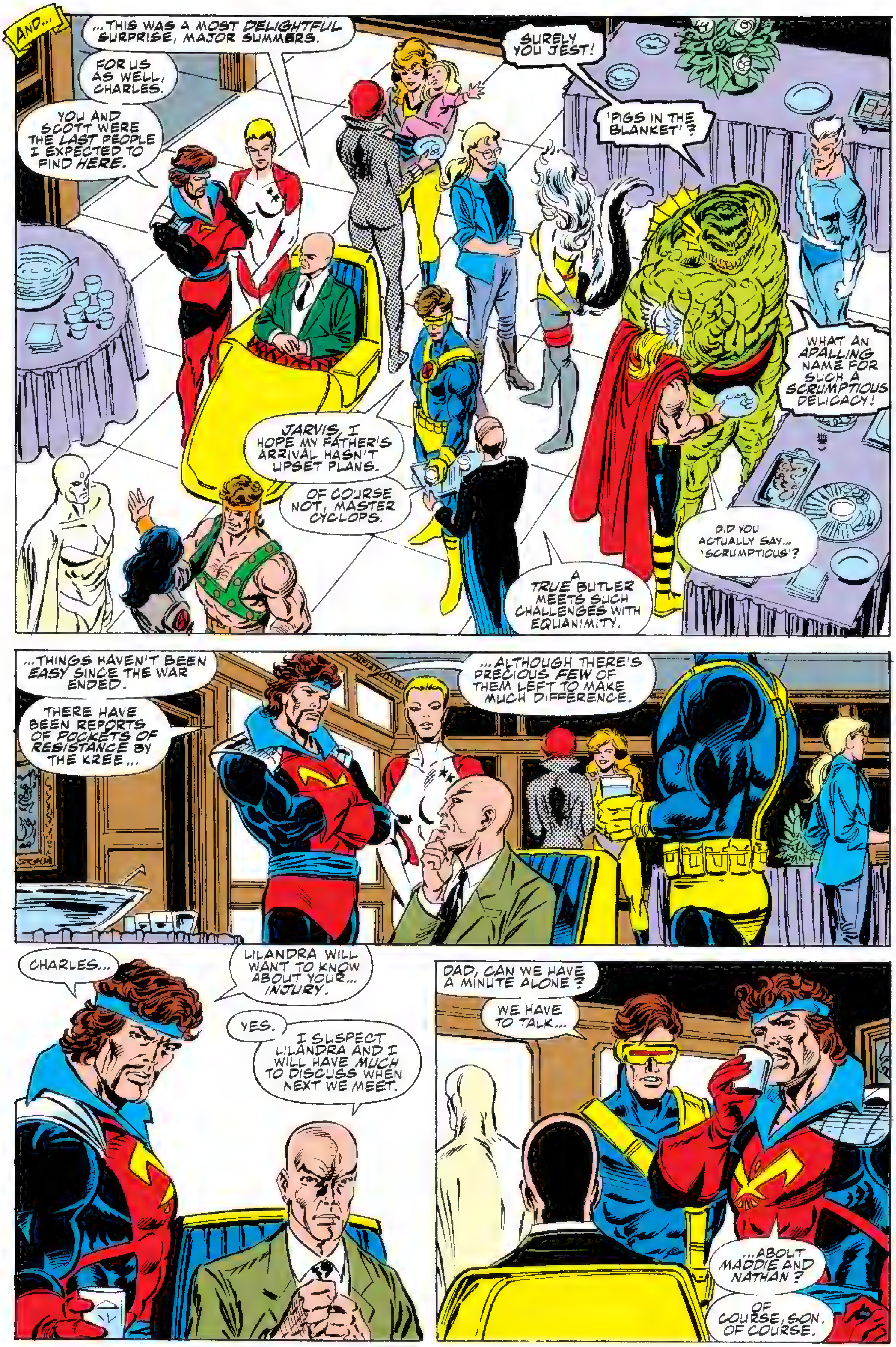

"... I SHALL KILL ONCE MORE!"
YESS!!
THE CROWD IS GOING WILD, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN--
--AS THE BLACK KNIGHT TAKES OUT YET ANOTHER ARMORED BEHEMOTH!
LOOK AT THAT FLIP, FOLKS!
IS THERE NO STOPPING THIS MAN -- OR WHAT?!
UNBELIEVABLE!
A REVERSE GUT THRUST--!
--AND THE MONSTER IS DOWN!
THE CROWD ROARS! THEY GET TO THEIR FEET! THEY--
DANE WHITMAN, WE HAVE BEEN IN SEARCH OF THEE.
DID'ST THOU FORGET OUR COUNCIL WITH THE X-MEN?

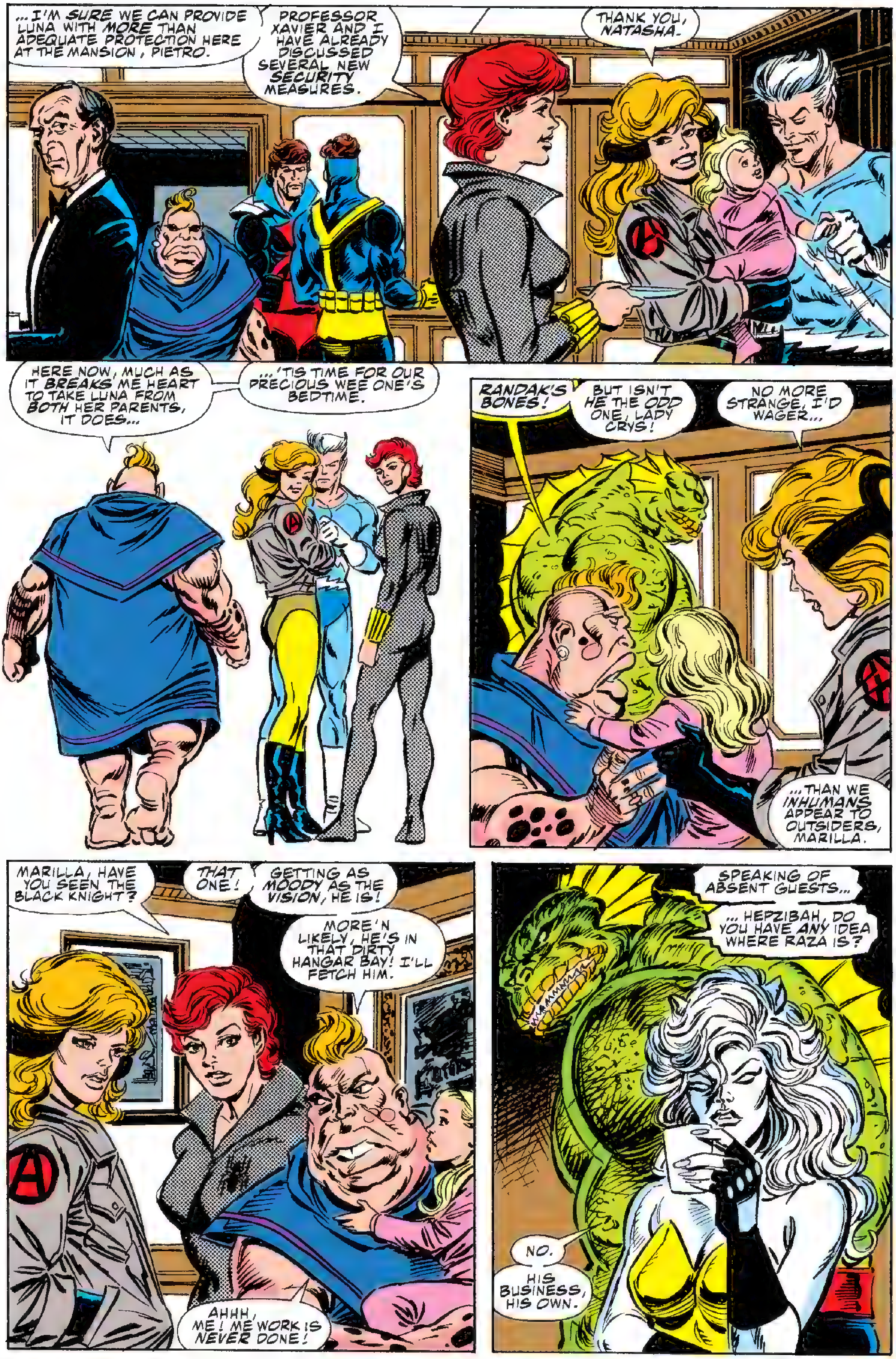

I DIDN'T FORGET, HERCULES...
I DECIDED TO SKIP IT.
BUT, DANE, THIS XAVIER GUY ISN'T EXACTLY THE SOCIAL TYPE.
HE DOESN'T SHOW UP UNLESS SOMETHING REALLY SERIOUS IS ABOUT TO BREAK.
AND FROM THE LOOK OF THINGS, CRYS IS GOING TO NEED ALL OUR SUPPORT.
BUT, Y'KNOW, I GOTTA TELL YA--
--HER HUSBAND'S NOT HALF AS OBNOXIOUS AS I WAS EXPECTING!
REALLY, THOR?
THAT JUST MAKES MY DAY!
FSHAK
COMPUTER, TERMINATE ATTACK SEQUENCE...
...AND TRANSPORT DROIDS TO THE REPAIR BAY.
LISTEN, GUYS--
--I DIDN'T GO, BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO.
CAPEESH?
WHOA.
WHAT'S EATING HIM?
HE DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE YOU SHAVED YOUR BEARD!
AYE!
FORTUNATELY, MY FEELINGS ARE NOT EASILY BRUISED.

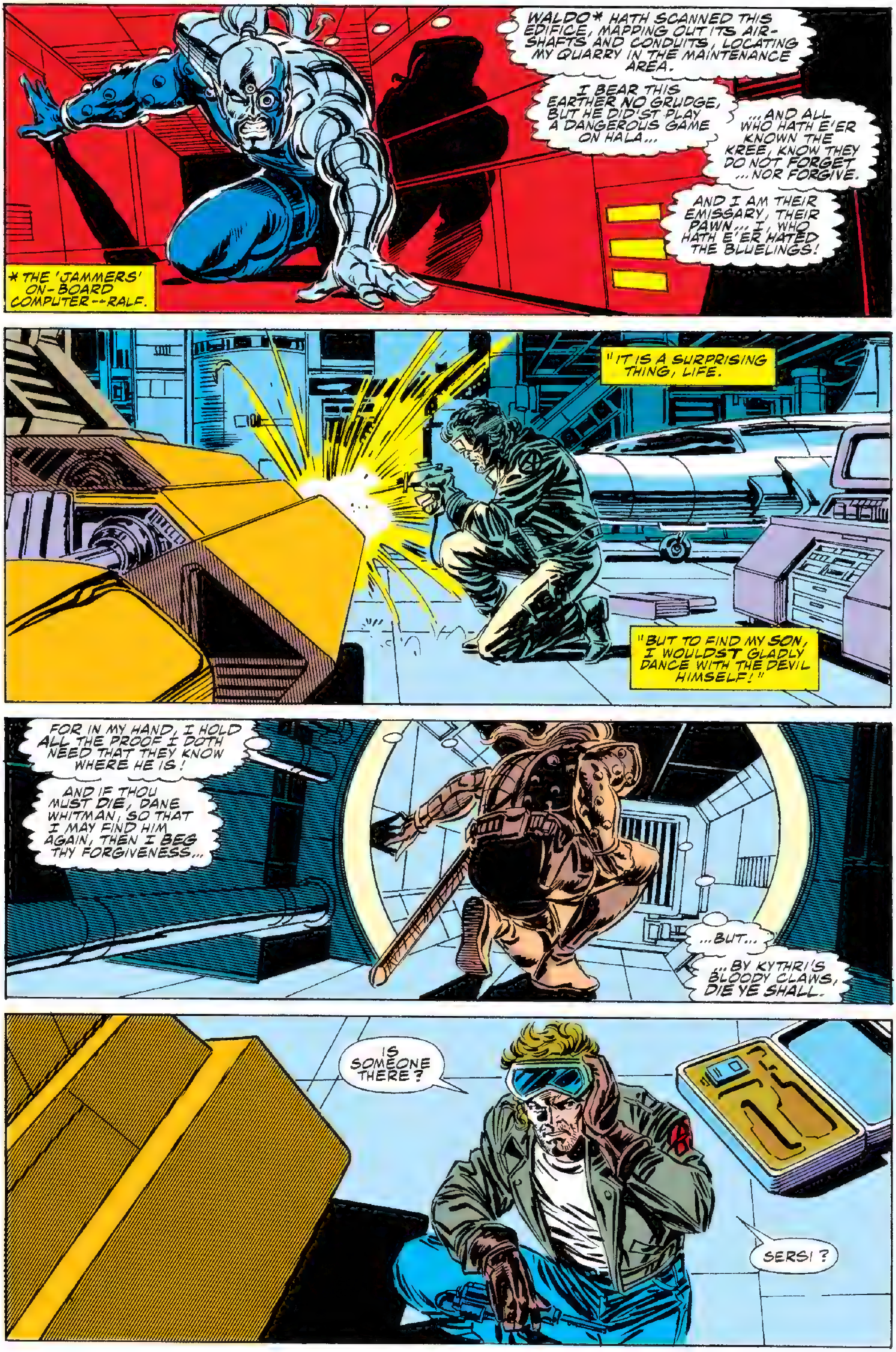

--MUST DO WHAT IS *BEST* FOR LUNA.
WE CANNOT TAKE *ANYTHING* TO DO WITH MY FATHER LIGHTLY.
WHA--?
PIETRO.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT.
I AGREE, PIETRO, BUT--
DANE?
I-IT'S ALL RIGHT.
WE MISSED YOU AT THE MEETING.
SORRY.
I WAS *BUSY.*
"I WAS BUSY"?!
NICE, WHITMAN... REAL NICE!
A FRIEND *NEEDS* YOUR SUPPORT, AND WHAT DO YOU DO?
YOU ACT LIKE A *COLD FISH* AND PULL AWAY! MAN, WITH FRIENDS LIKE YOU, WHO NEEDS ENEMIES?
BUT LET'S BE *HONEST*, OKAY? FOR *ONCE?*
WHAT I FEEL FOR CRYSTAL IS *MORE* THAN FRIENDSHIP, ISN'T IT? AND IT *CAN'T* HAPPEN! IT *WON'T* HAPPEN!
SHE WANTS TO *REPAIR* HER MARRIAGE --MAKE IT *WORK.*
AND IT *TEARS ME UP* THAT I KEEP HOPING SHE *FAILS!*
SOME FRIEND. *SOME HERO.*
PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS?
SERSI!
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS, AVENGER?
OH, *HERE* AND *THERE.*
WHAT *AILS* YOU, HANDSOME?


THERE'S A LOT ON MY MIND.
THINKING MAYBE I SHOULD LEAVE THE AVENGERS AGAIN.
THAT WOULD BE FOOLISH.
TELL ME... DO THE RECENT EVENTS ON HALA HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS... MELANCHOLY?
PARTIALLY.
DO YOU EVER DOUBT WE DID THE RIGHT THING OUT THERE?
NOT FOR A MOMENT.
THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE WAS A CONSTRUCT THAT DESERVED DESTRUCTION...
...AND I THINK SEVERAL BILLION DEAD KREE WOULD AGREE.
CAP DIDN'T.
HE LEFT THE TEAM BECAUSE OF IT.
CAPTAIN AMERICA IS A NOBLE MAN, SADLY OUT OF TOUCH WITH TODAY'S REALITY.
I WISH I COULD BE AS SURE.
I KEEP WONDERING IF I KILLED A LIVING BEING!
AND I KEEP HEARING THAT LAST SCREAM ECHOING IN MY MIND!
DANE...
...THE PAST IS IMMUTABLE.
YOU HAVE TO LET IT GO...
...AND ENJOY THE PRESENT.

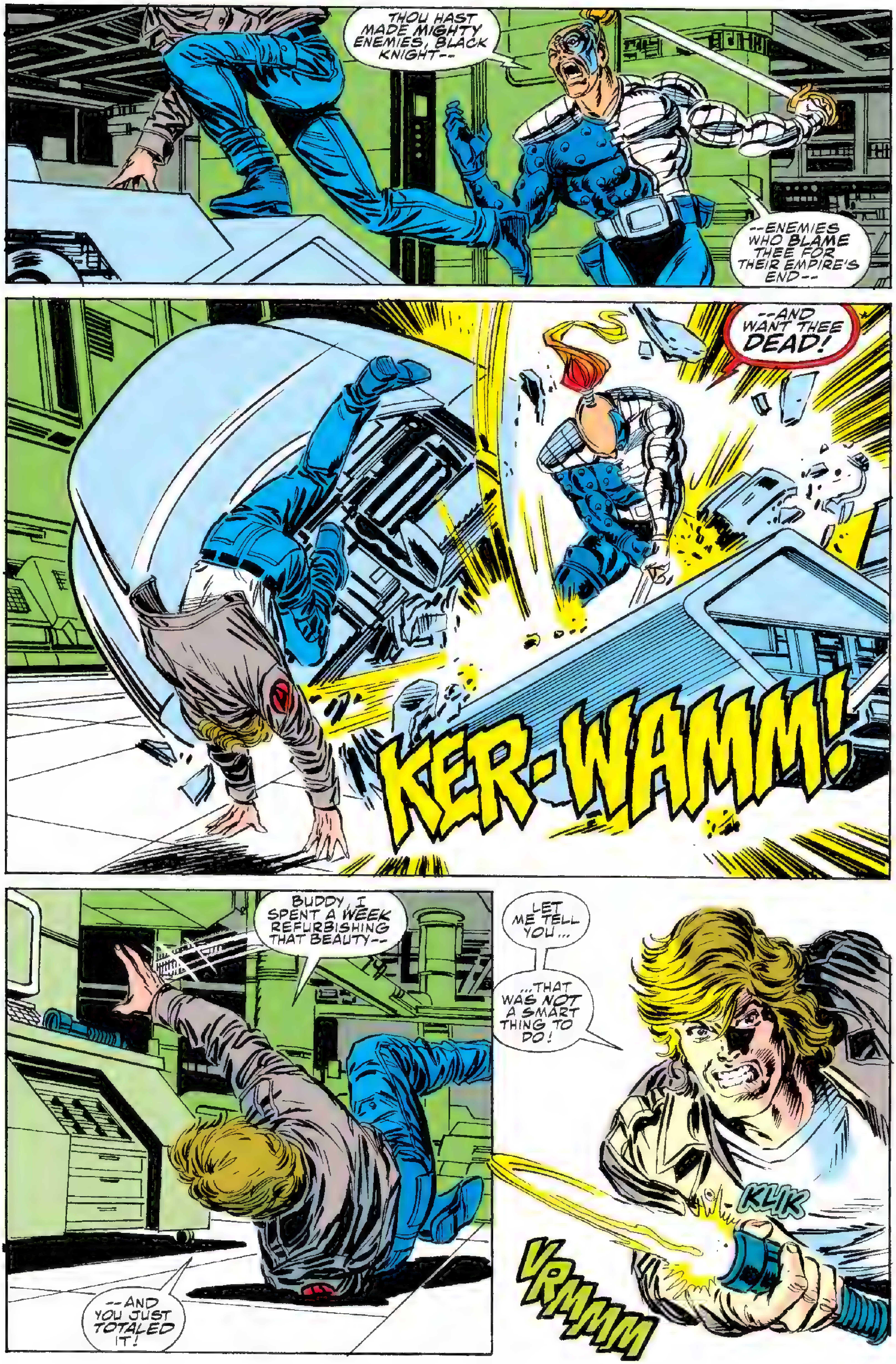

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?!
YOU'RE A BIG BOY, DANE.
DO I HAVE TO EXPLAIN?
YOU CAN'T DENY IT...
...YOU'RE AS INTRIGUED AS I!
SERSI, YOU DON'T UNDER--
WHAT THE--?!
IT APPEARS WE HAVE VISITORS.
SOMEONE SHOULD INFORM JARVIS HE SHOULD SET MORE PLATES FOR DINNER.


AND...
...THIS WAS A MOST DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE, MAJOR SUMMERS.
FOR US AS WELL, CHARLES.
YOU AND SCOTT WERE THE LAST PEOPLE I EXPECTED TO FIND HERE.
SURELY YOU JEST!
'PIGS IN THE BLANKET'?
WHAT AN APALLING NAME FOR SUCH A SCRUMPTIOUS DELICACY!
JARVIS, I HOPE MY FATHER'S ARRIVAL HASN'T UPSET PLANS.
OF COURSE NOT, MASTER CYCLOPS.
DID YOU ACTUALLY SAY... 'SCRUMPTIOUS'?
A TRUE BUTLER MEETS SUCH CHALLENGES WITH EQUANIMITY.
...THINGS HAVEN'T BEEN EASY SINCE THE WAR ENDED.
THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF POCKETS OF RESISTANCE BY THE KREE...
...ALTHOUGH THERE'S PRECIOUS FEW OF THEM LEFT TO MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE.
CHARLES...
LILANDRA WILL WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR... INJURY.
YES.
I SUSPECT LILANDRA AND I WILL HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS WHEN NEXT WE MEET.
DAD, CAN WE HAVE A MINUTE ALONE?
WE HAVE TO TALK...
...ABOUT MADDIE AND NATHAN?
OF COURSE, SON. OF COURSE.

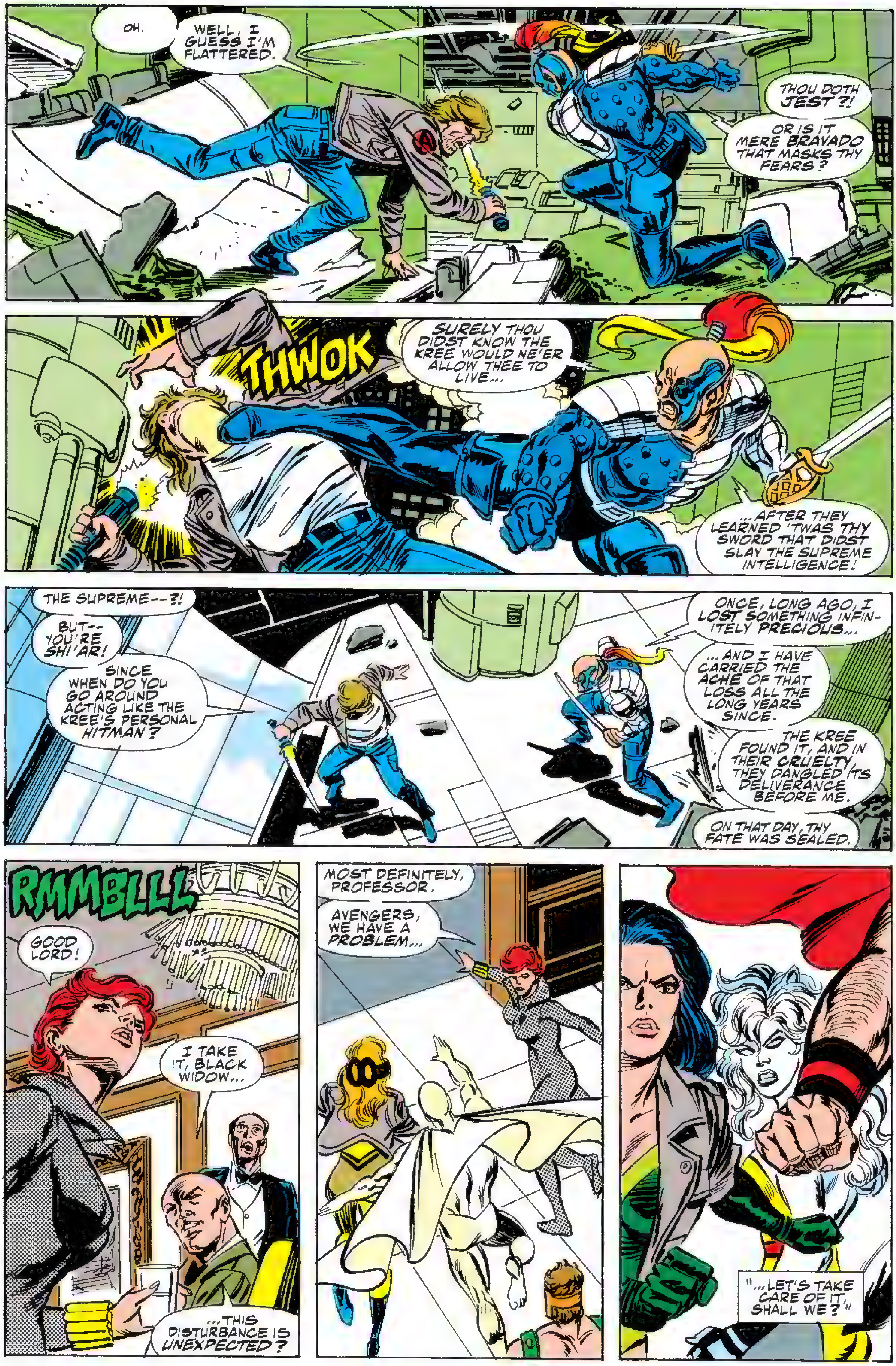

...I'M SURE WE CAN PROVIDE LUNA WITH MORE THAN ADEQUATE PROTECTION HERE AT THE MANSION, PIETRO.
PROFESSOR XAVIER AND I HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED SEVERAL NEW SECURITY MEASURES.
THANK YOU, NATASHA.
HERE NOW, MUCH AS IT BREAKS ME HEART TO TAKE LUNA FROM BOTH HER PARENTS, IT DOES...
...'TIS TIME FOR OUR PRECIOUS WEE ONE'S BEDTIME.
RANDAK'S BONES!
BUT ISN'T HE THE ODD ONE, LADY CRYS!
NO MORE STRANGE, I'D WAGER...
...THAN WE INHUMANS APPEAR TO OUTSIDERS, MARILLA.
MARILLA, HAVE YOU SEEN THE BLACK KNIGHT?
THAT ONE!
GETTING AS MOODY AS THE VISION, HE IS!
MORE'N LIKELY, HE'S IN THAT DIRTY HANGAR BAY! I'LL FETCH HIM.
AHHH, ME! ME WORK IS NEVER DONE!
SPEAKING OF ABSENT GUESTS...
...HEPZIBAH, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE RAZA IS?
NO.
HIS BUSINESS, HIS OWN.

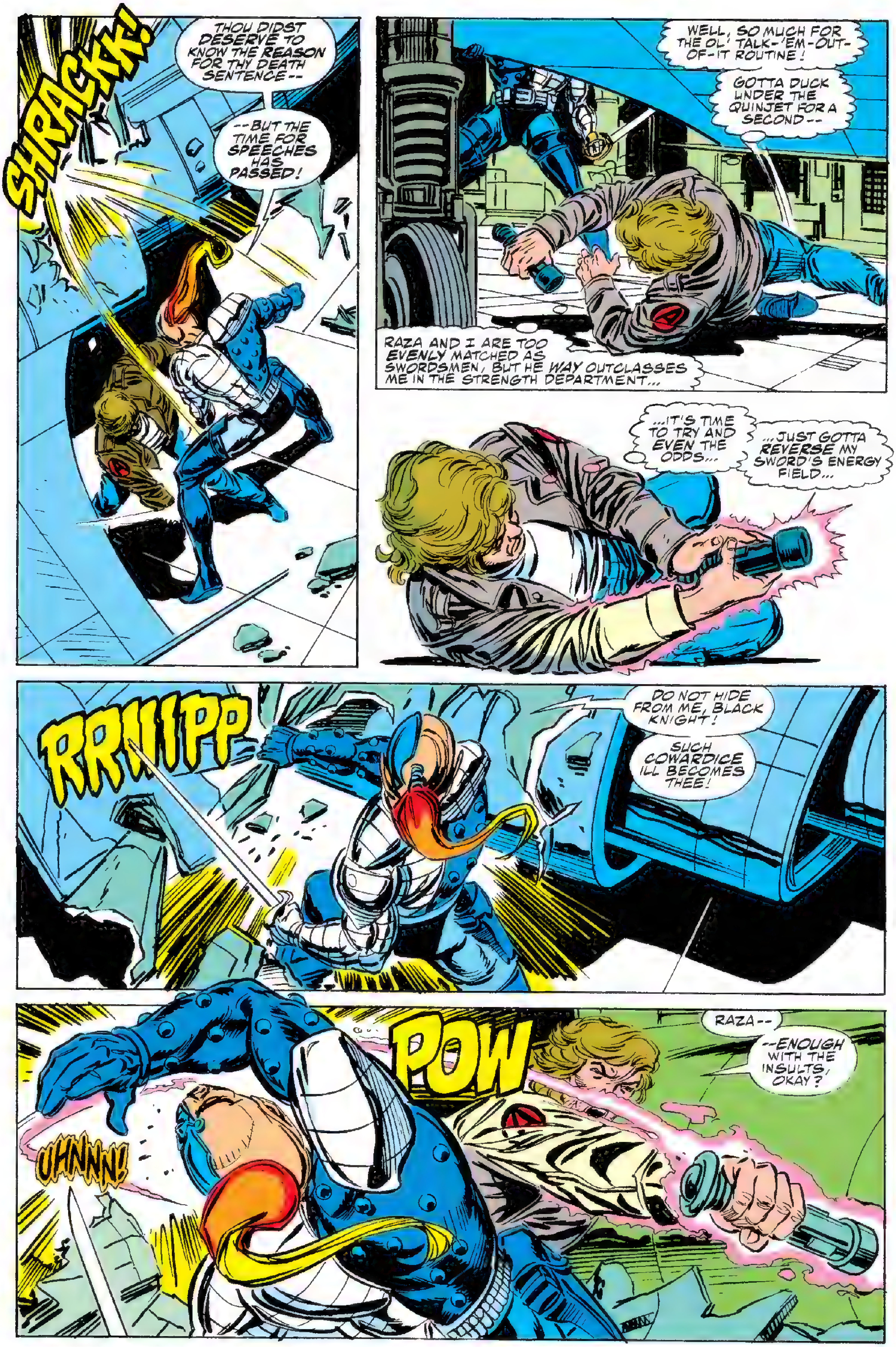

WALDO* HATH SCANNED THIS EDIFICE, MAPPING OUT ITS AIR-SHAFTS AND CONDUITS, LOCATING MY QUARRY IN THE MAINTENANCE AREA.
I BEAR THIS EARTHER NO GRUDGE, BUT HE DID'ST PLAY A DANGEROUS GAME ON HALA...
...AND ALL WHO HATH E'ER KNOWN THE KREE, KNOW THEY DO NOT FORGET ...NOR FORGIVE.
AND I AM THEIR EMISSARY, THEIR PAWN... I, WHO HATH E'ER HATED THE BLUELINGS!
* THE 'JAMMERS' ON-BOARD COMPUTER--RALF.
"IT IS A SURPRISING THING, LIFE.
"BUT TO FIND MY SON, I WOULDST GLADLY DANCE WITH THE DEVIL HIMSELF!"
FOR IN MY HAND, I HOLD ALL THE PROOF I DOTH NEED THAT THEY KNOW WHERE HE IS!
AND IF THOU MUST DIE, DANE WHITMAN, SO THAT I MAY FIND HIM AGAIN, THEN I BEG THY FORGIVENESS...
...BUT...
...BY KYTHRI'S BLOODY CLAWS, DIE YE SHALL.
IS SOMEONE THERE?
SERSI?

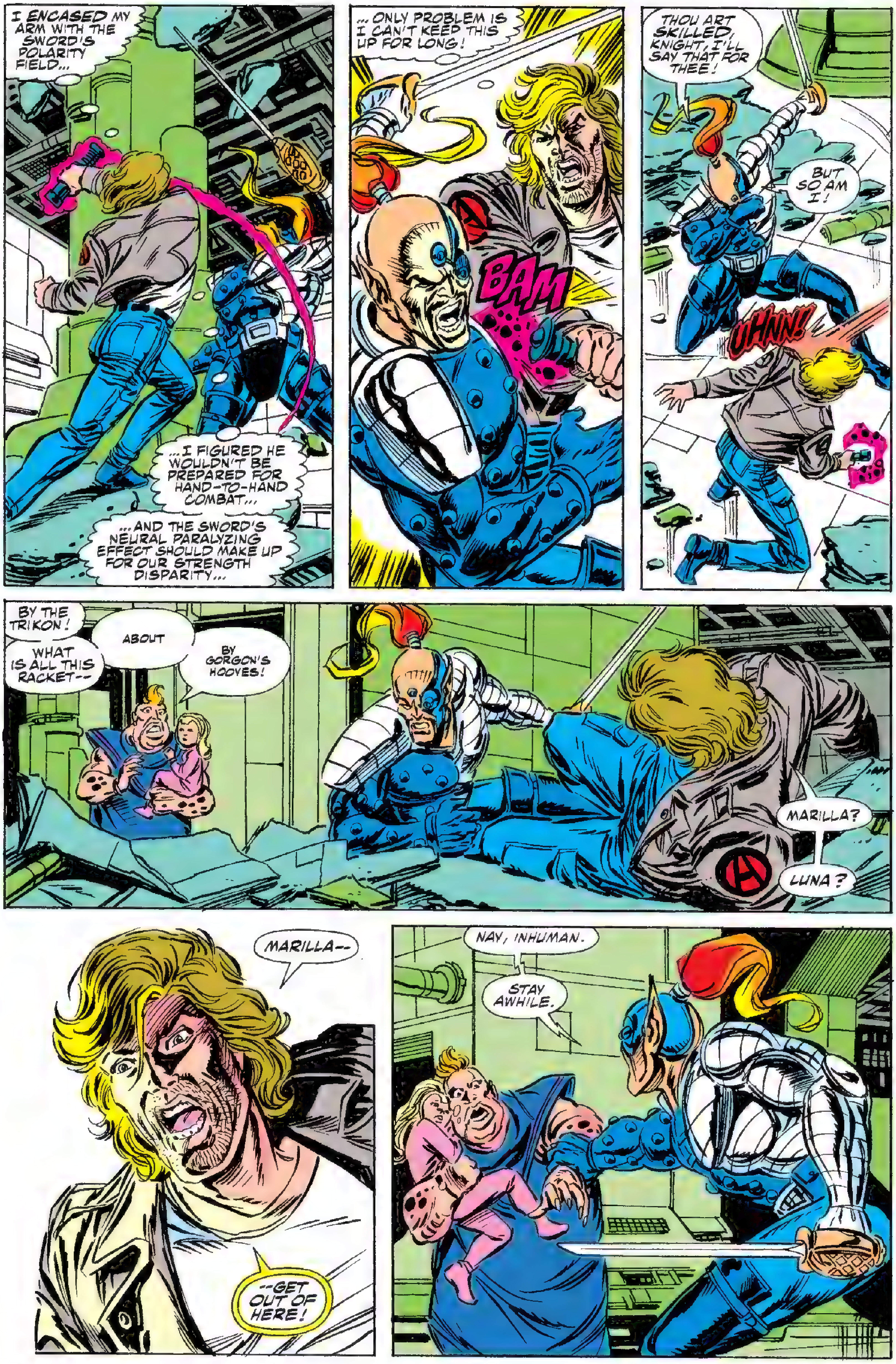
WHY DO I HESITATE?
WITH THE MOMENT NIGH, DOES THE INKY SHADOW OF DOUBT THREATEN TO O'ERWHELM ME?
NAY!
I REJECT IT! IT IS MY SON'S LIFE AT STAKE!
MY SON!!
NO ONE THERE. GUESS I'M FEELING KINDA JUMPY.
FUNNY, I WAS ALMOST HOPING IT WAS SERSI.
MAYBE I SHOULD TAKE HER UP ON HER OFFER. MAYBE ALL I NEED IS A LITTLE DISTRACTION--
KER-
KLANG
AVENGER, PREPARE THYSELF!
FOR THY DAY IS DONE!!
WHO THE--?!

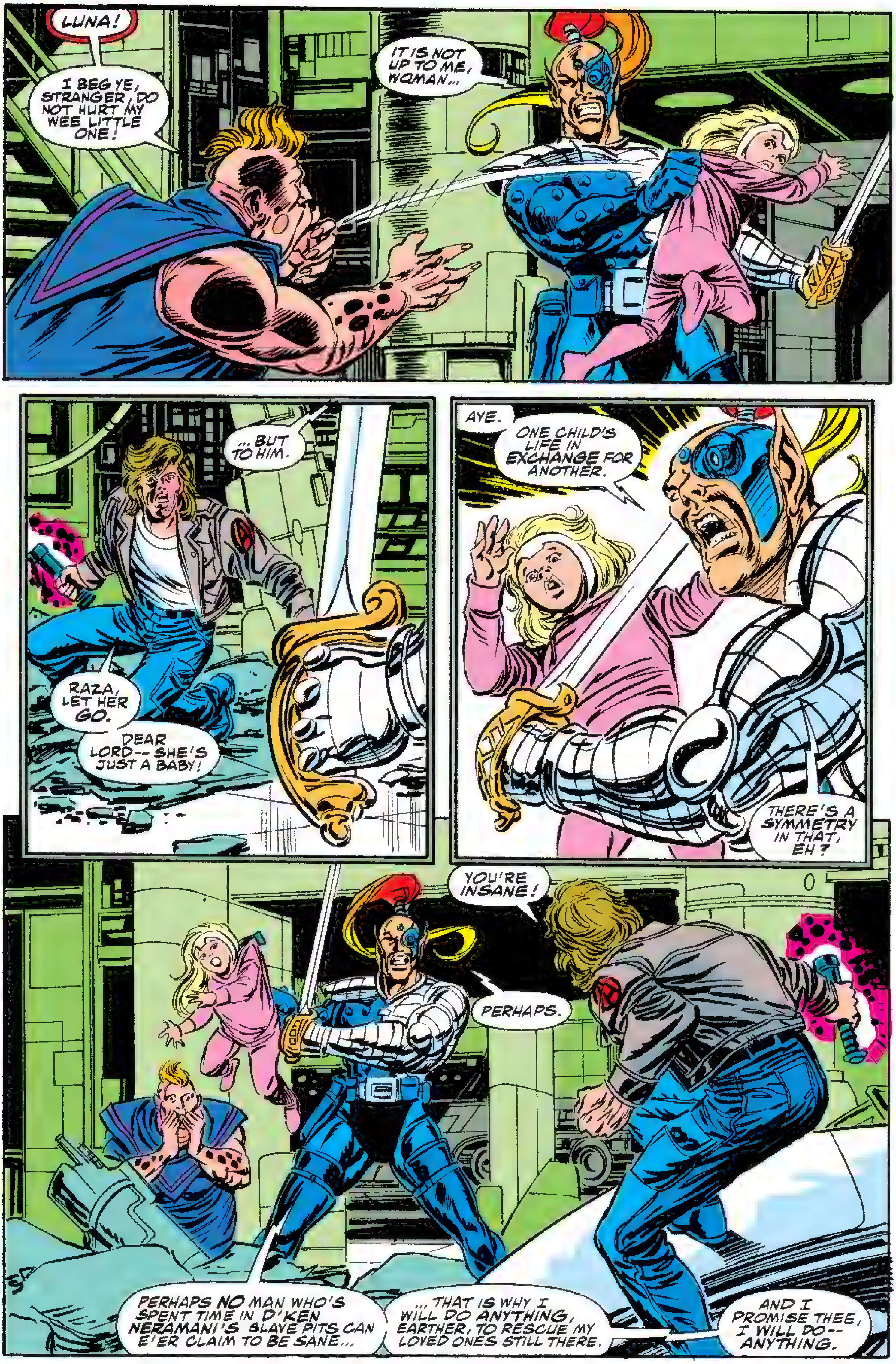

THOU HAST MADE MIGHTY ENEMIES, BLACK KNIGHT--
--ENEMIES WHO BLAME THEE FOR THEIR EMPIRE'S END--
--AND WANT THEE DEAD!
KER-WAMM!
BUDDY, I SPENT A WEEK REFURBISHING THAT BEAUTY--
--AND YOU JUST TOTALED IT!
LET ME TELL YOU...
...THAT WAS NOT A SMART THING TO DO!
KLIK
VRMMM

NOT SMART AT ALL!
FWSSSH
THOU HAST FOUND THY WEAPON.
GOOD.
'TIS THEN A MORE FITTING END FOR THEE, AS A WARRIOR BORN.
KNOW THEE, THIS BATTLE BRINGS ME NO JOY, KNIGHT!
THY DEATH IS NOT OF MY CHOOSING -- FOR THOU ART BINARY'S TEAMMATE -- HER FRIEND -- A RELATIONSHIP I DO NOT TAKE LIGHTLY!
I DO ONLY WHAT I MUST...
...MAY SHARRA FORGIVE ME!
KER-
SMASK!
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT--
--YOU HAVE NOTHING AGAINST ME--
--YOU DON'T WANT TO HURT ME--
--BUT SOMEONE'S FORCING YOU TO KILL ME!
RAZA, PAL, YOU GOTTA LEARN--
--DON'T GIVE IN TO PEER PRESSURE!
SLASSK
ARGHH!
ALL RIGHT, CYBORG--
--WHAT'S GOING ON? HAVE THE STARJAMMERS ATTACKED THE OTHER AVENGERS?
N-NAY.
ONLY THEE.

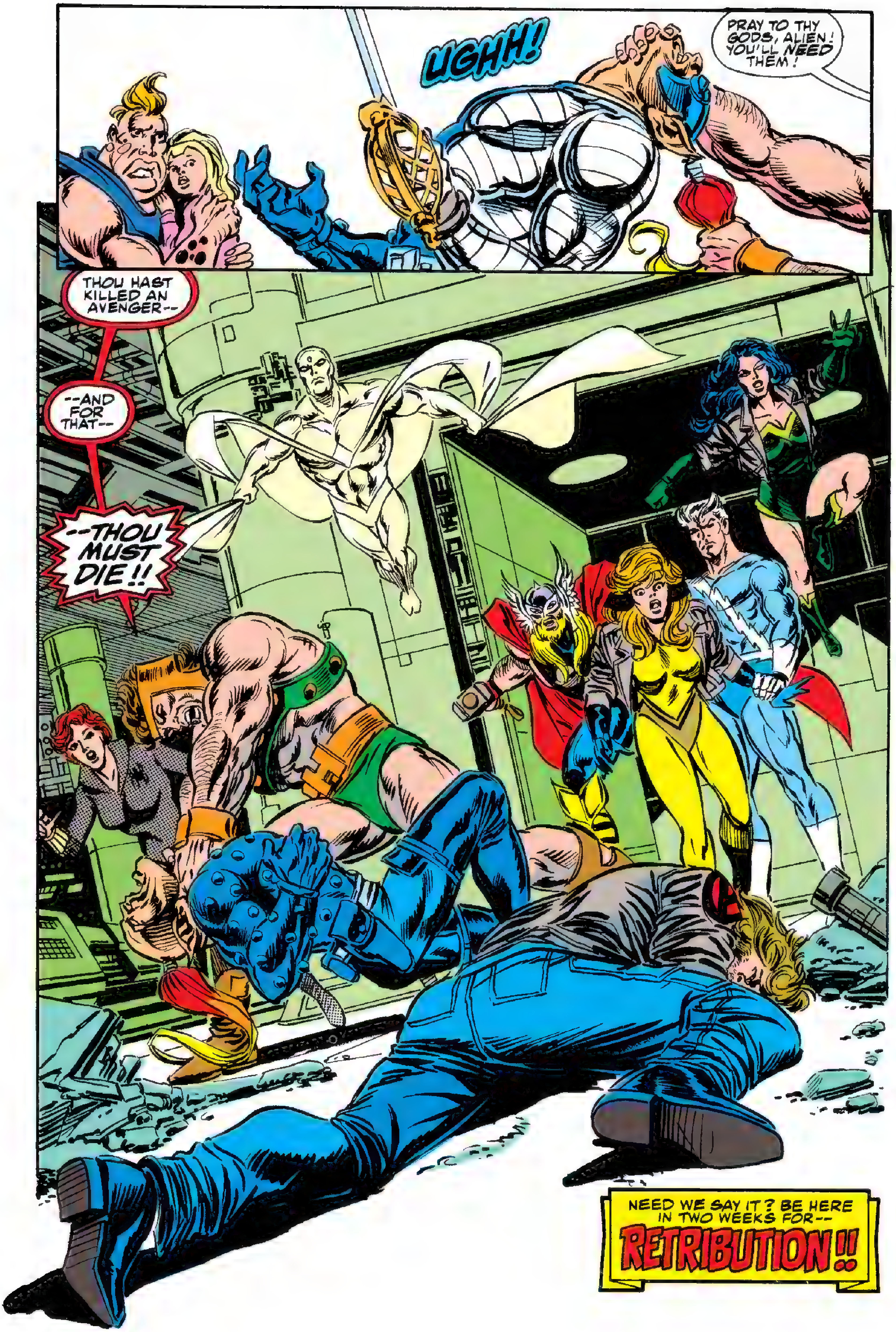

OH.
WELL, I GUESS I'M FLATTERED.
THOU DOTH JEST?!
OR IS IT MERE BRAVADO THAT MASKS THY FEARS?
THWOK
SURELY THOU DIDST KNOW THE KREE WOULD NE'ER ALLOW THEE TO LIVE...
...AFTER THEY LEARNED 'TWAS THY SWORD THAT DIDST SLAY THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE!
THE SUPREME--?!
BUT--YOU'RE SHI'AR!
SINCE WHEN DO YOU GO AROUND ACTING LIKE THE KREE'S PERSONAL HITMAN?
ONCE, LONG AGO, I LOST SOMETHING INFINITELY PRECIOUS...
...AND I HAVE CARRIED THE ACHE OF THAT LOSS ALL THE LONG YEARS SINCE.
THE KREE FOUND IT, AND IN THEIR CRUELTY, THEY DANGLED ITS DELIVERANCE BEFORE ME.
ON THAT DAY, THY FATE WAS SEALED.
RMMBLLL
GOOD LORD!
I TAKE IT, BLACK WIDOW...
...THIS DISTURBANCE IS UNEXPECTED?
MOST DEFINITELY, PROFESSOR.
AVENGERS, WE HAVE A PROBLEM...
"...LET'S TAKE CARE OF IT, SHALL WE?"

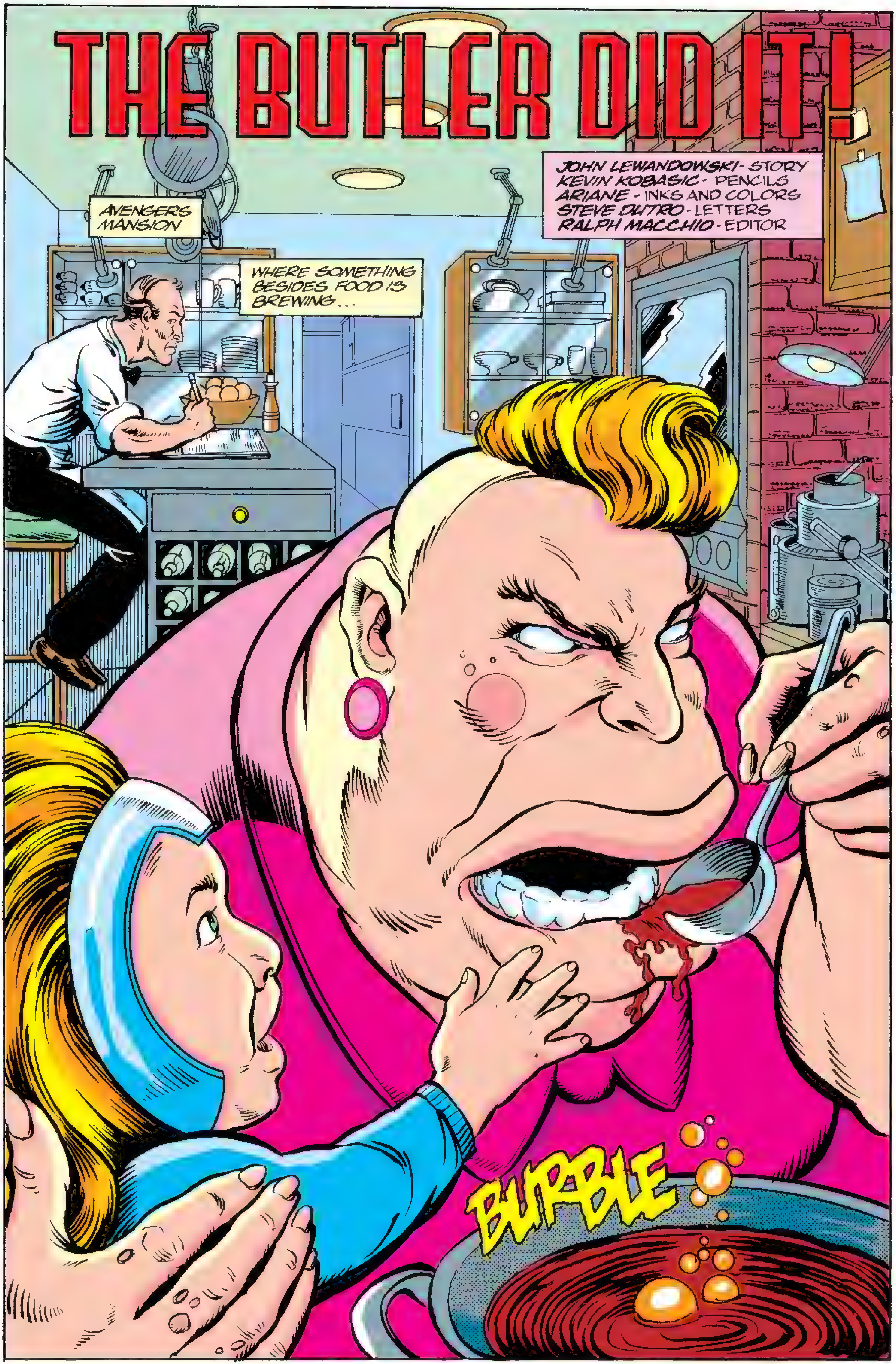

SHRACKK!
THOU DIDST DESERVE TO KNOW THE REASON FOR THY DEATH SENTENCE--
--BUT THE TIME FOR SPEECHES HAS PASSED!
WELL, SO MUCH FOR THE OL' TALK-'EM-OUT-OF-IT ROUTINE!
GOTTA DUCK UNDER THE QUINJET FOR A SECOND--
RAZA AND I ARE TOO EVENLY MATCHED AS SWORDSMEN, BUT HE WAY OUTCLASSES ME IN THE STRENGTH DEPARTMENT...
...IT'S TIME TO TRY AND EVEN THE ODDS...
...JUST GOTTA REVERSE MY SWORD'S ENERGY FIELD...
RRIIIPP
DO NOT HIDE FROM ME, BLACK KNIGHT!
SUCH COWARDICE ILL BECOMES THEE!
POW
UHNNN!
RAZA--
--ENOUGH WITH THE INSULTS, OKAY?

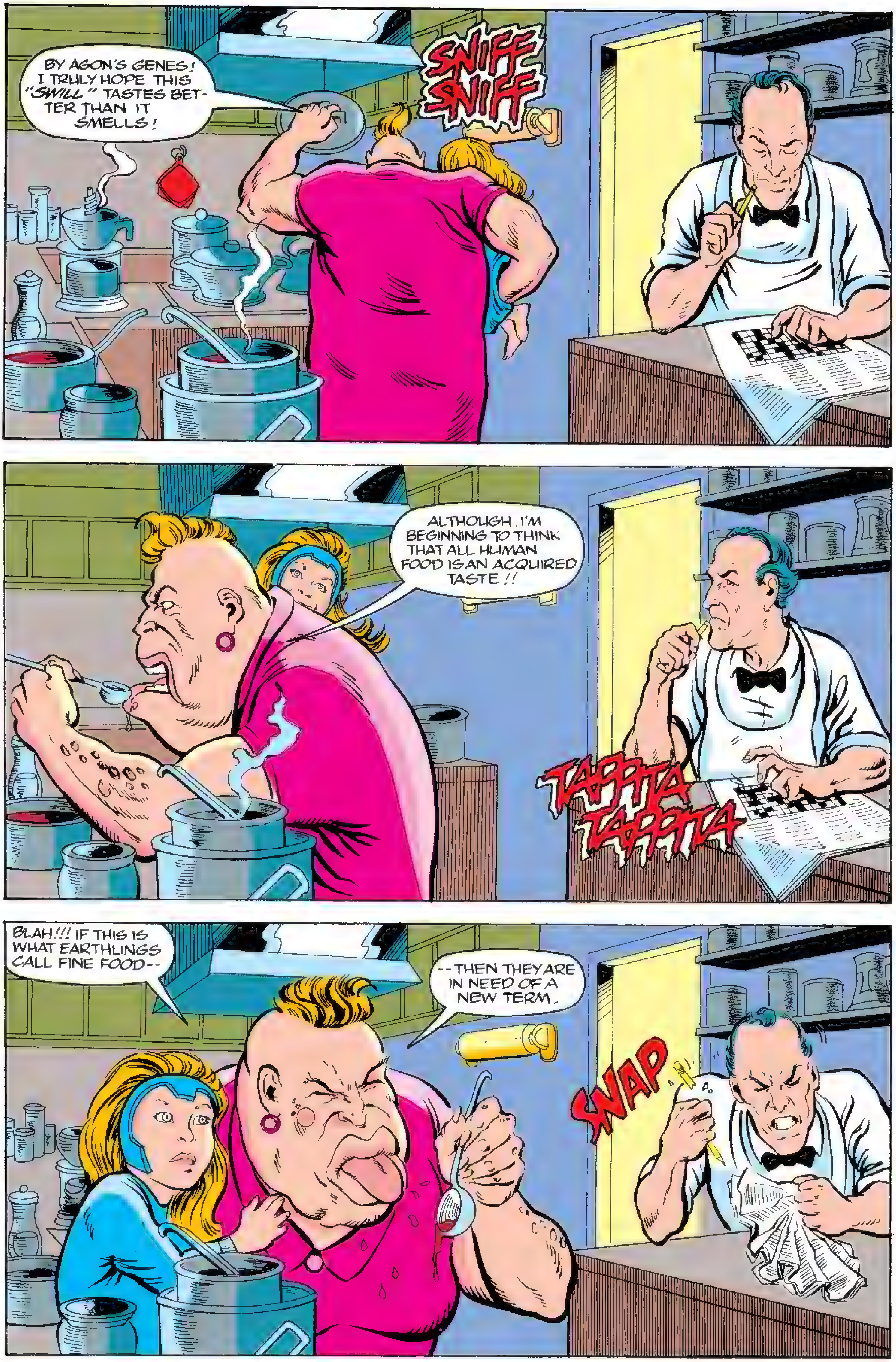

I ENCASED MY ARM WITH THE SWORD'S POLARITY FIELD...
...I FIGURED HE WOULDN'T BE PREPARED FOR HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT...
...AND THE SWORD'S NEURAL PARALYZING EFFECT SHOULD MAKE UP FOR OUR STRENGTH DISPARITY...
...ONLY PROBLEM IS I CAN'T KEEP THIS UP FOR LONG!
BAM
THOU ART SKILLED, KNIGHT, I'LL SAY THAT FOR THEE!
BUT SO AM I!
UHNN!
BY THE TRIKON!
WHAT IS ALL THIS RACKET--
ABOUT
BY GORGON'S HOOVES!
MARILLA?
LUNA?
MARILLA--
--GET OUT OF HERE!
NAY, INHUMAN.
STAY AWHILE.

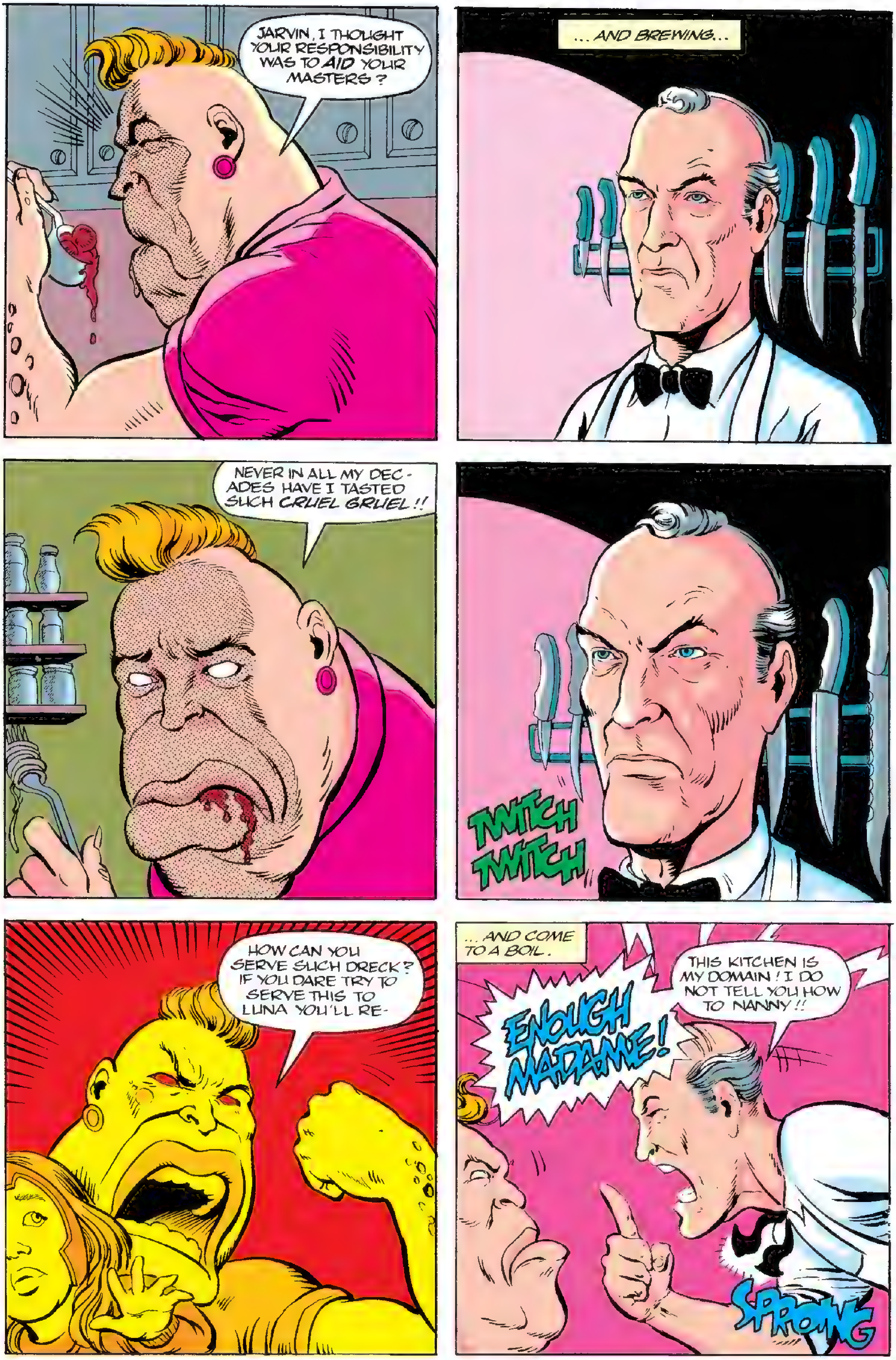

LUNA!
I BEG YE, STRANGER, DO NOT HURT MY WEE LITTLE ONE!
IT IS NOT UP TO ME, WOMAN...
...BUT TO HIM.
RAZA, LET HER GO.
DEAR LORD-- SHE'S JUST A BABY!
AYE.
ONE CHILD'S LIFE IN EXCHANGE FOR ANOTHER.
THERE'S A SYMMETRY IN THAT, EH?
YOU'RE INSANE!
PERHAPS.
PERHAPS **NO** MAN WHO'S SPENT TIME IN **D'KEN NERAMANI'S** SLAVE PITS CAN E'ER CLAIM TO BE SANE...
...THAT IS WHY I WILL DO **ANYTHING**, EARTHER, TO RESCUE MY LOVED ONES STILL THERE.
AND I PROMISE THEE, I WILL DO-- ANYTHING.

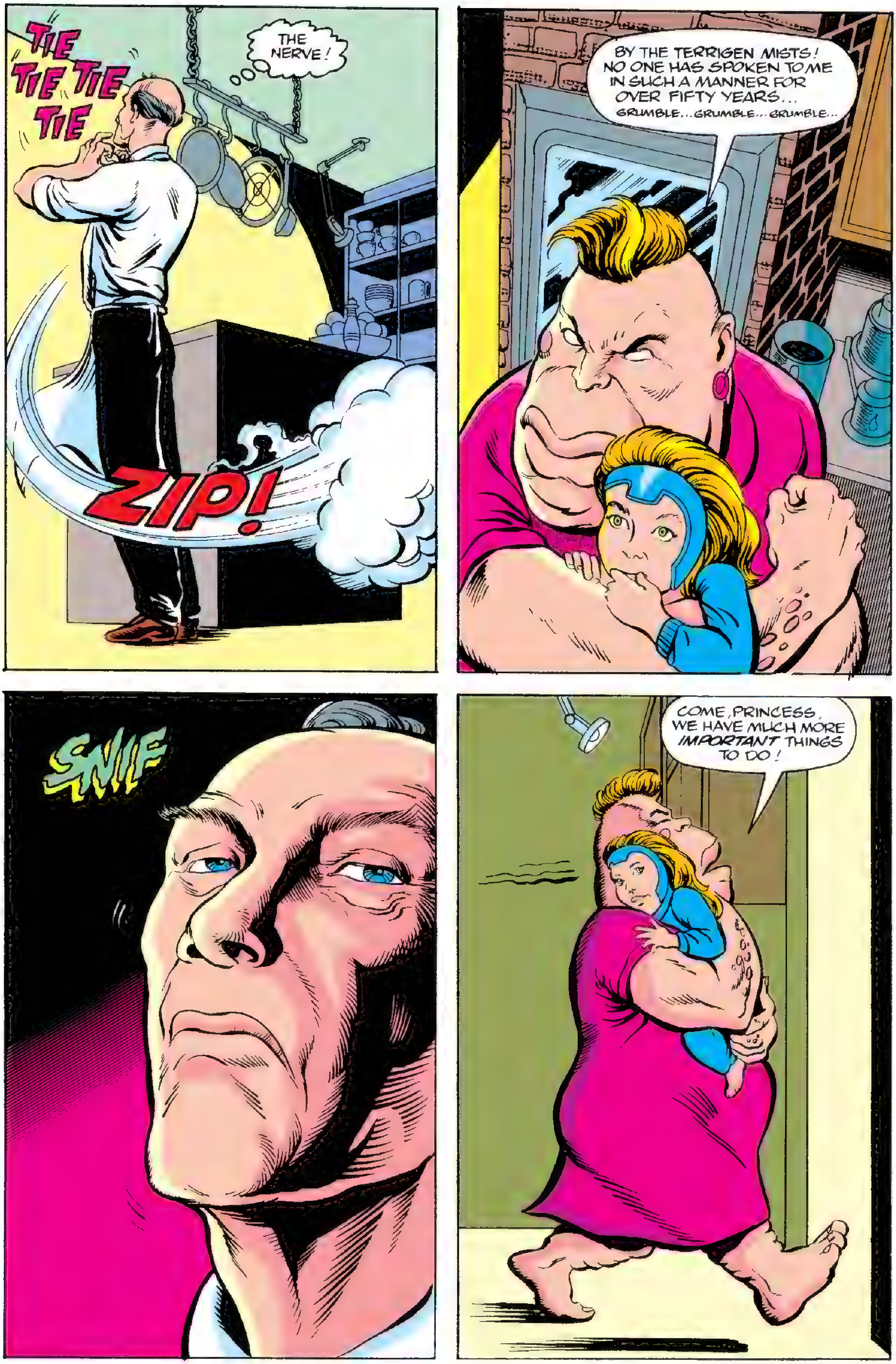
NO!
LUNAARRG!
SHUNT
FORGIVE ME, KNIGHT--
--NEVER WOULD I HURT THE CHILD.
BUT THE RUSE WAS NEEDED--
--TO END THIS DANCE MACABRE.
BY SHARRA'S BURNING EYES--
WHAT HAVE I DONE? IS THIS WHAT I HATH BECOME?

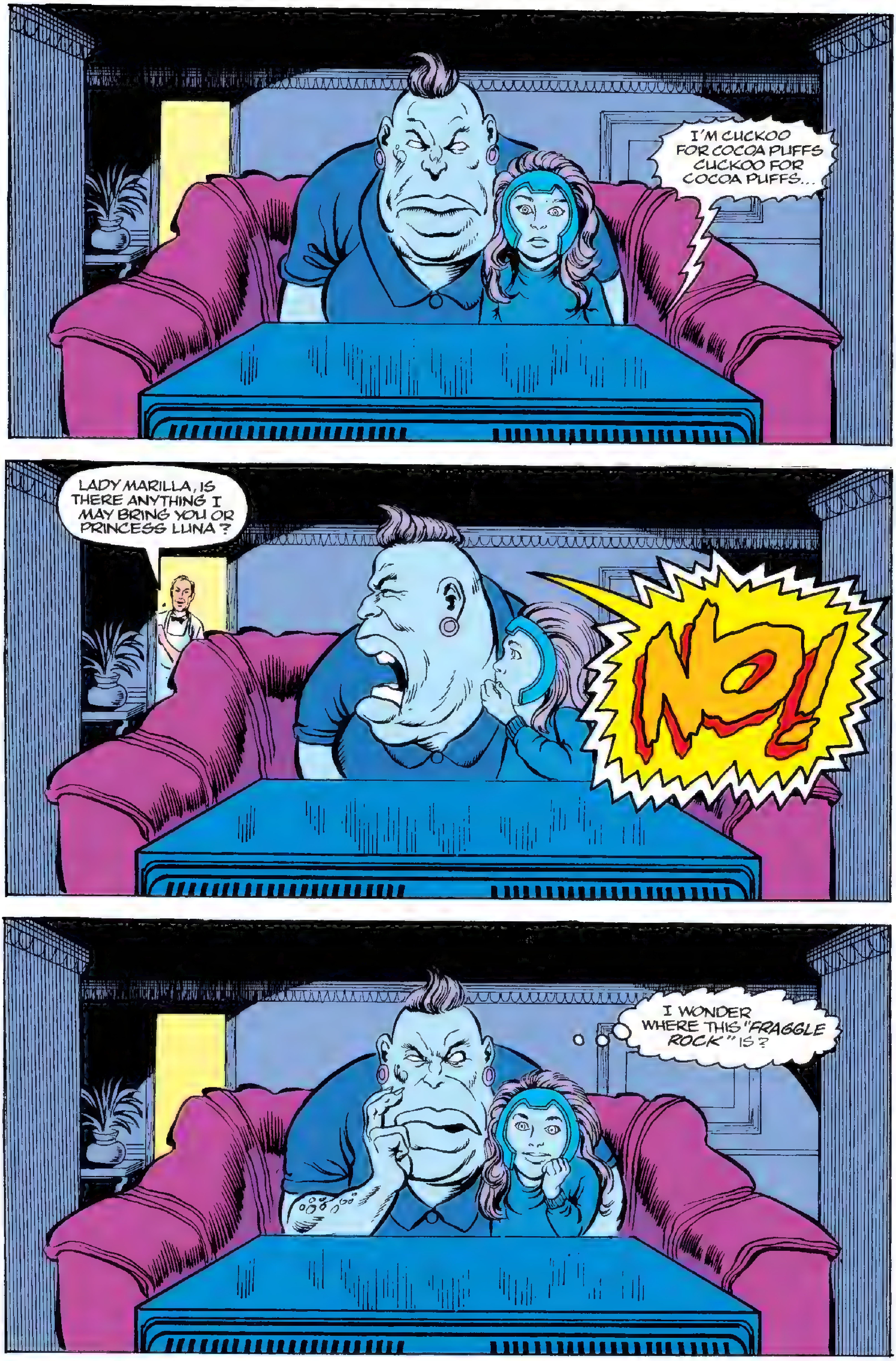

UGHH!
PRAY TO THY GODS, ALIEN! YOU'LL NEED THEM!
THOU HAST KILLED AN AVENGER--
--AND FOR THAT--
--THOU MUST DIE!!
NEED WE SAY IT? BE HERE IN TWO WEEKS FOR--
RETRIBUTION!!

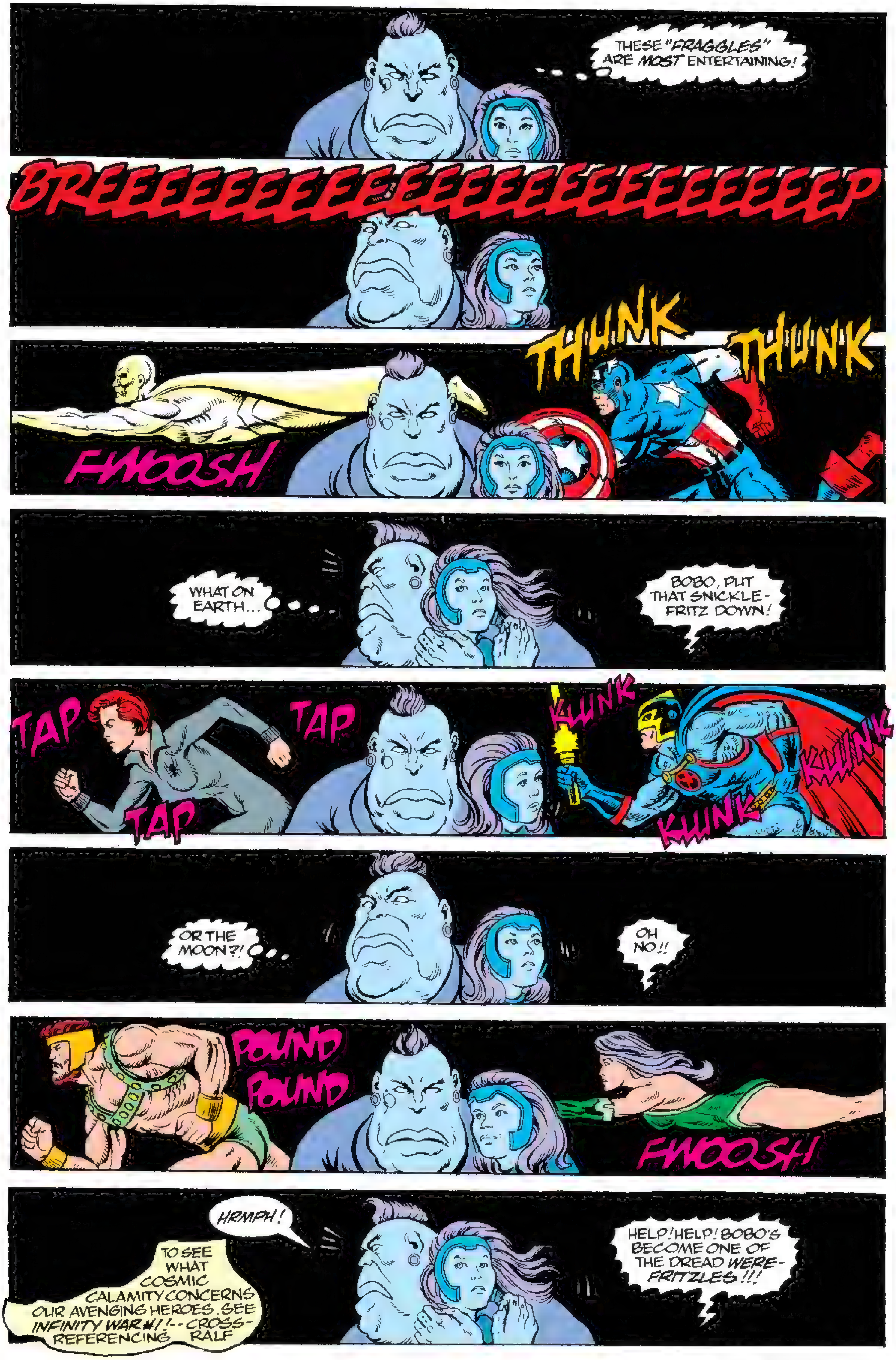

THE BUTLER DID IT!
AVENGERS MANSION
WHERE SOMETHING BESIDES FOOD IS BREWING...
JOHN LEWANDOWSKI - STORY
KEVIN KOBASIC - PENCILS
ARIANE - INKS AND COLORS
STEVE DUTRO - LETTERS
RALPH MACCHIO - EDITOR
BURBLE

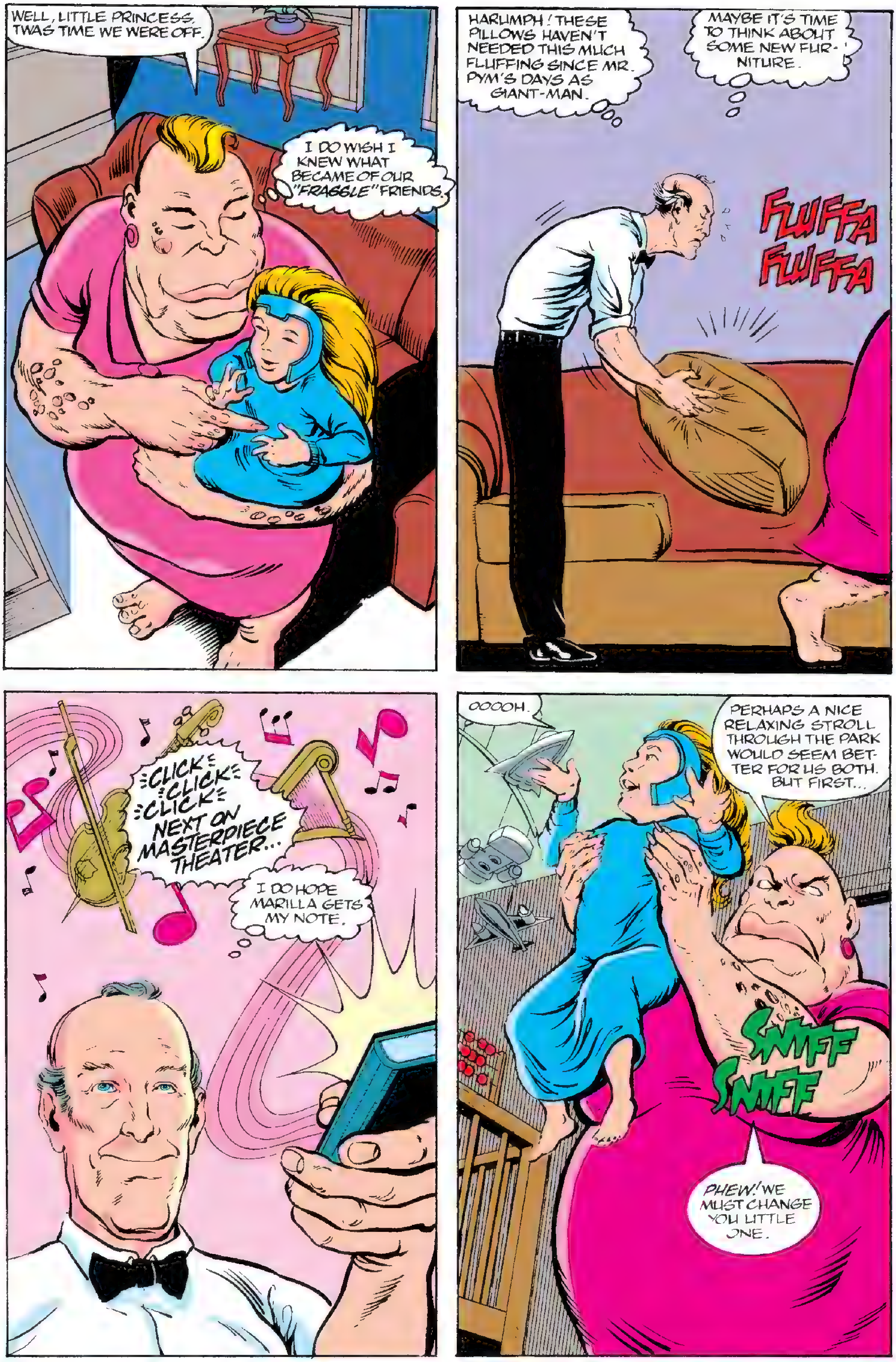

BY AGON'S GENES! I TRULY HOPE THIS "SWILL" TASTES BETTER THAN IT SMELLS!
SNIFF SNIFF
ALTHOUGH, I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT ALL HUMAN FOOD IS AN ACQUIRED TASTE!!
TAPPITA TAPPITA
BLAH!!! IF THIS IS WHAT EARTHLINGS CALL FINE FOOD--
--THEN THEY ARE IN NEED OF A NEW TERM.
SNAP

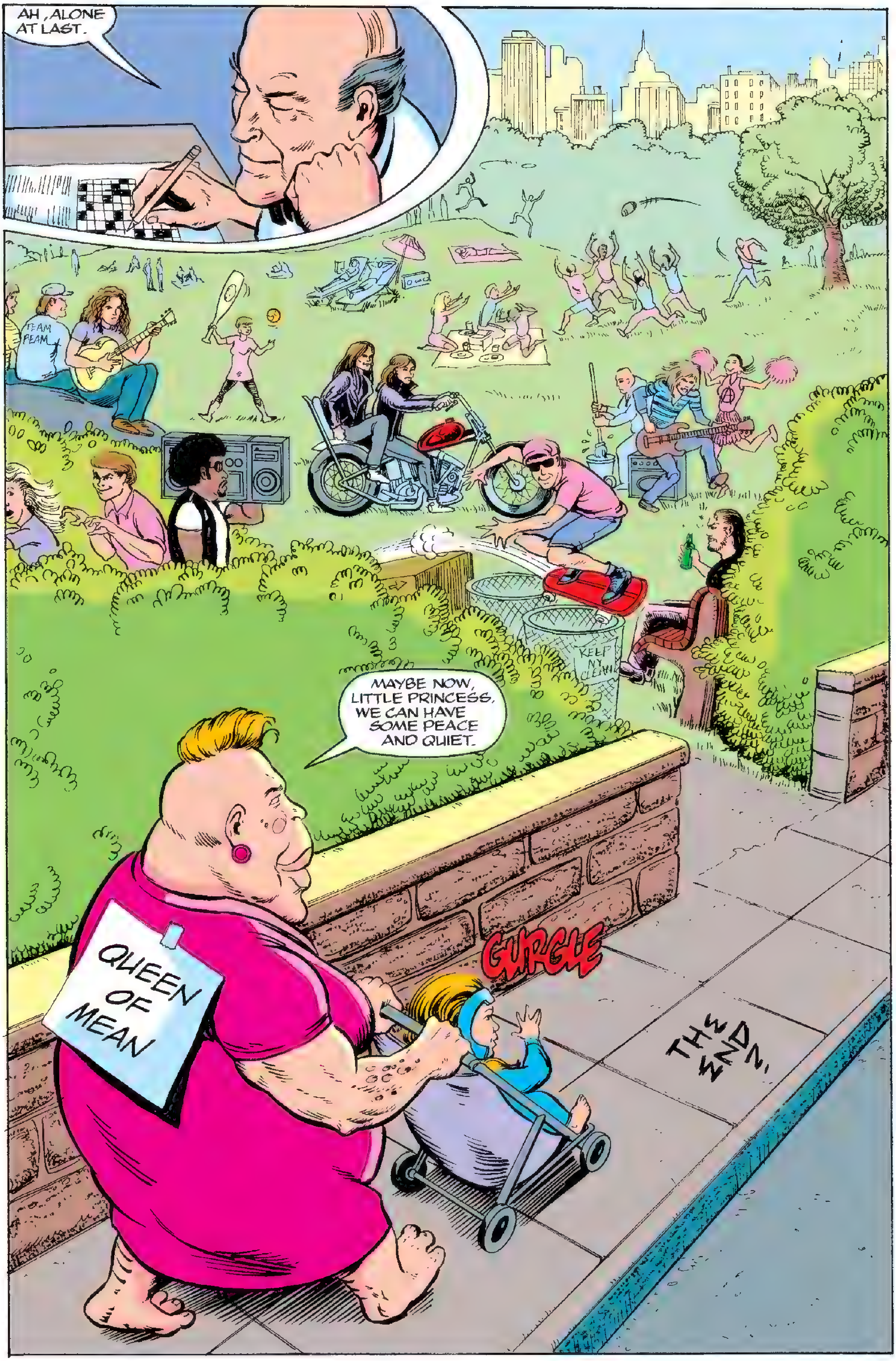

JARVIN, I THOUGHT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY WAS TO *AID* YOUR MASTERS?
... AND BREWING...
NEVER IN ALL MY DECADES HAVE I TASTED SUCH *CRUEL GRUEL*!!
TWITCH TWITCH
HOW CAN YOU SERVE SUCH DRECK? IF YOU DARE TRY TO SERVE THIS TO LUNA YOU'LL RE-
... AND COME TO A BOIL.
ENOUGH MADAME!
THIS KITCHEN IS MY DOMAIN! I DO NOT TELL YOU HOW TO NANNY!!
SPROING


TIE TIE TIE TIE
THE NERVE!
ZIP!
BY THE TERRIGEN MISTS! NO ONE HAS SPOKEN TO ME IN SUCH A MANNER FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS...
GRUMBLE...GRUMBLE...GRUMBLE...
SNIF
COME, PRINCESS, WE HAVE MUCH MORE *IMPORTANT* THINGS TO DO!


I'M CUCKOO FOR COCOA PUFFS CUCKOO FOR COCOA PUFFS...
LADY MARILLA, IS THERE ANYTHING I MAY BRING YOU OR PRINCESS LUNA?
NO!
I WONDER WHERE THIS "FRAGGLE ROCK" IS?


THESE "FRAGGLES" ARE MOST ENTERTAINING!
BREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP
THUNK
THUNK
FWOOSH
WHAT ON EARTH...
BOBO, PUT THAT SNICKLE-FRITZ DOWN!
TAP
TAP
TAP
KLUNK
KLUNK
KLUNK
OR THE MOON?!
OH NO!!
POUND
POUND
FWOOSH
HRMPH!
HELP! HELP! BOBO'S BECOME ONE OF THE DREAD WERE-FRITZLES!!!
TO SEE WHAT COSMIC CALAMITY CONCERNS OUR AVENGING HEROES, SEE INFINITY WAR #1!--CROSS-REFERENCING RALF

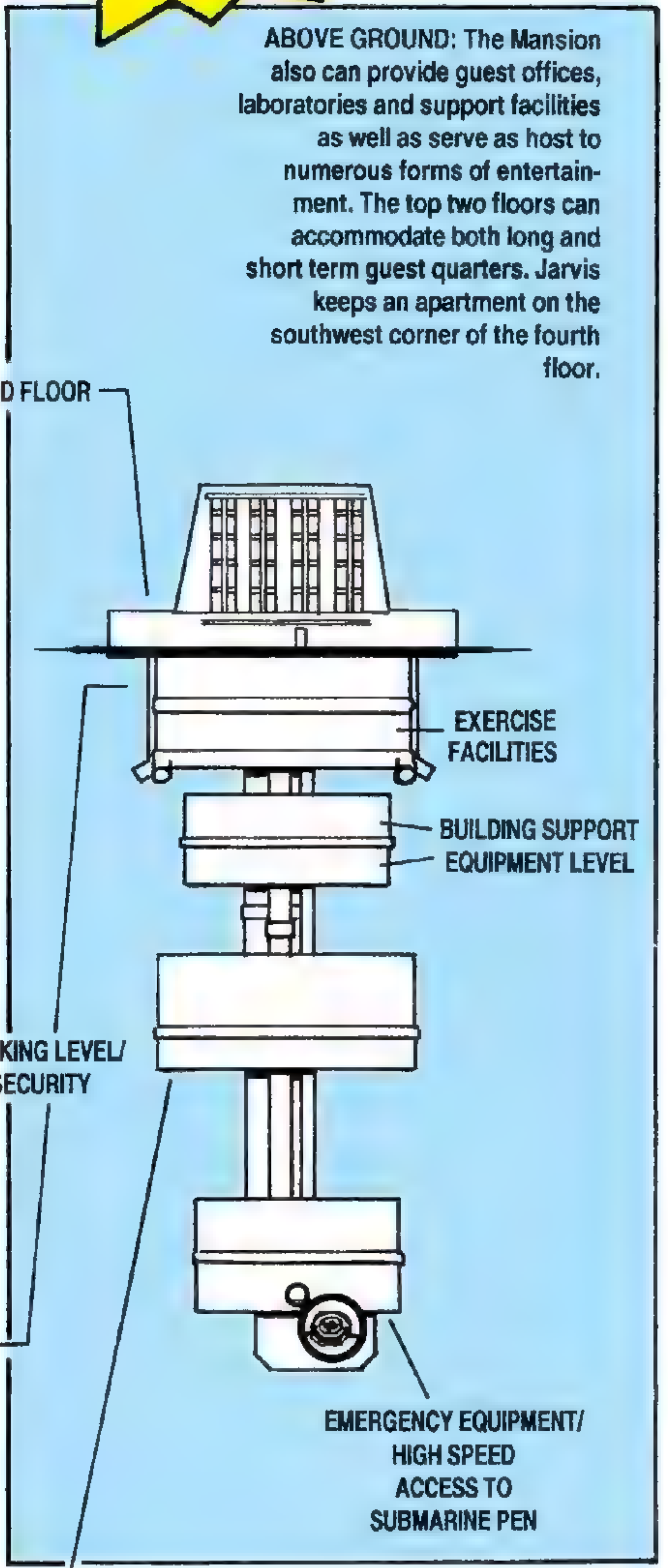

WELL, LITTLE PRINCESS, TWAS TIME WE WERE OFF.
I DO WISH I KNEW WHAT BECAME OF OUR "FRAGGLE" FRIENDS.
HARUMPH! THESE PILLOWS HAVEN'T NEEDED THIS MUCH FLUFFING SINCE MR. PYM'S DAYS AS GIANT-MAN.
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO THINK ABOUT SOME NEW FURNITURE.
FLUFFA FLUFFA
CLICK CLICK CLICK NEXT ON MASTERPIECE THEATER...
I DO HOPE MARILLA GETS MY NOTE.
OOOOH.
PERHAPS A NICE RELAXING STROLL THROUGH THE PARK WOULD SEEM BETTER FOR US BOTH. BUT FIRST...
SNIFF SNIFF
PHEW! WE MUST CHANGE YOU LITTLE ONE.


AH, ALONE AT LAST.
TEAM PEAM
KEEP NY CLEAN
MAYBE NOW, LITTLE PRINCESS, WE CAN HAVE SOME PEACE AND QUIET.
QUEEN OF MEAN
GURGLE
THWDN, WN

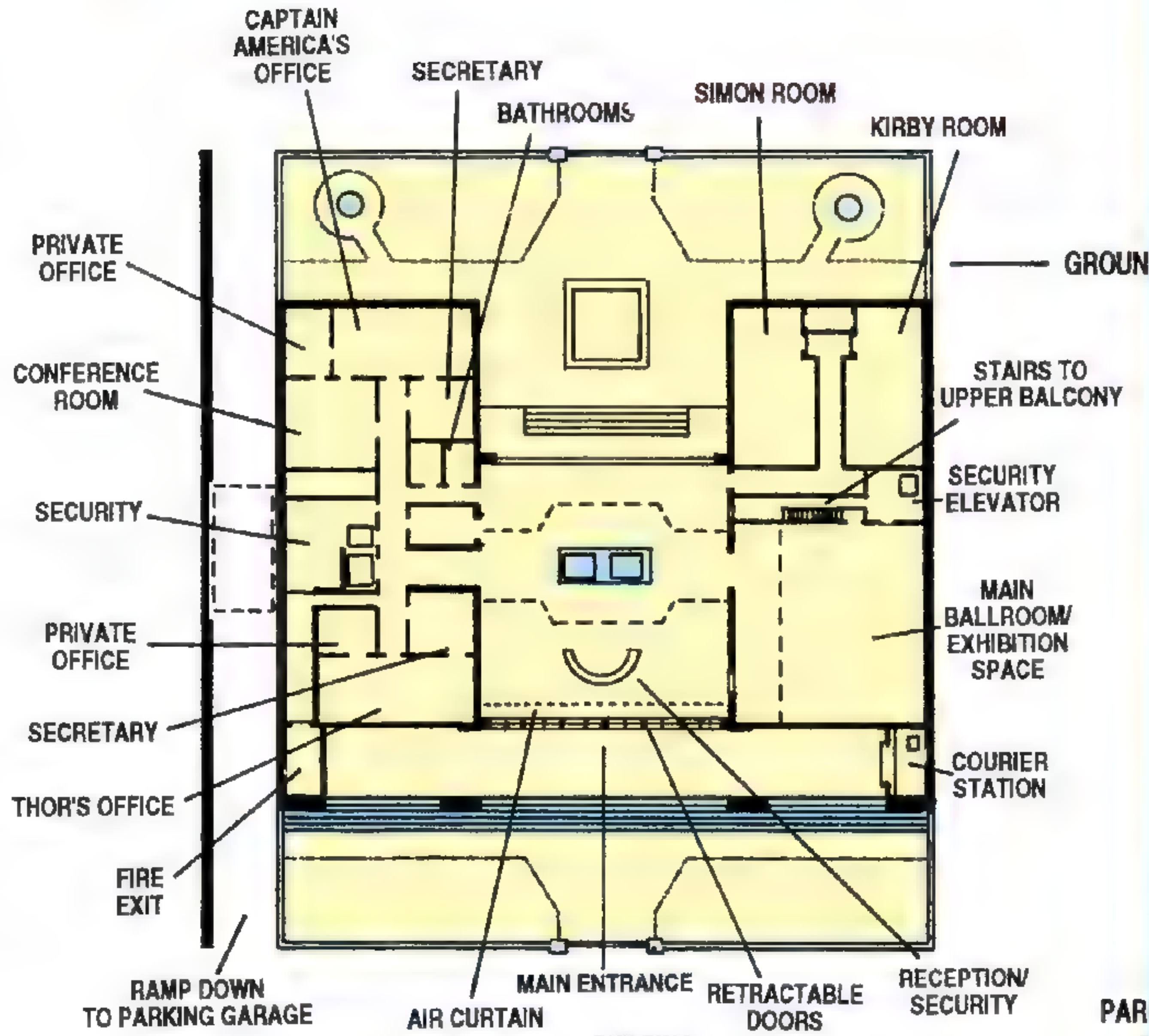
THE NEW AVENGERS MANSION

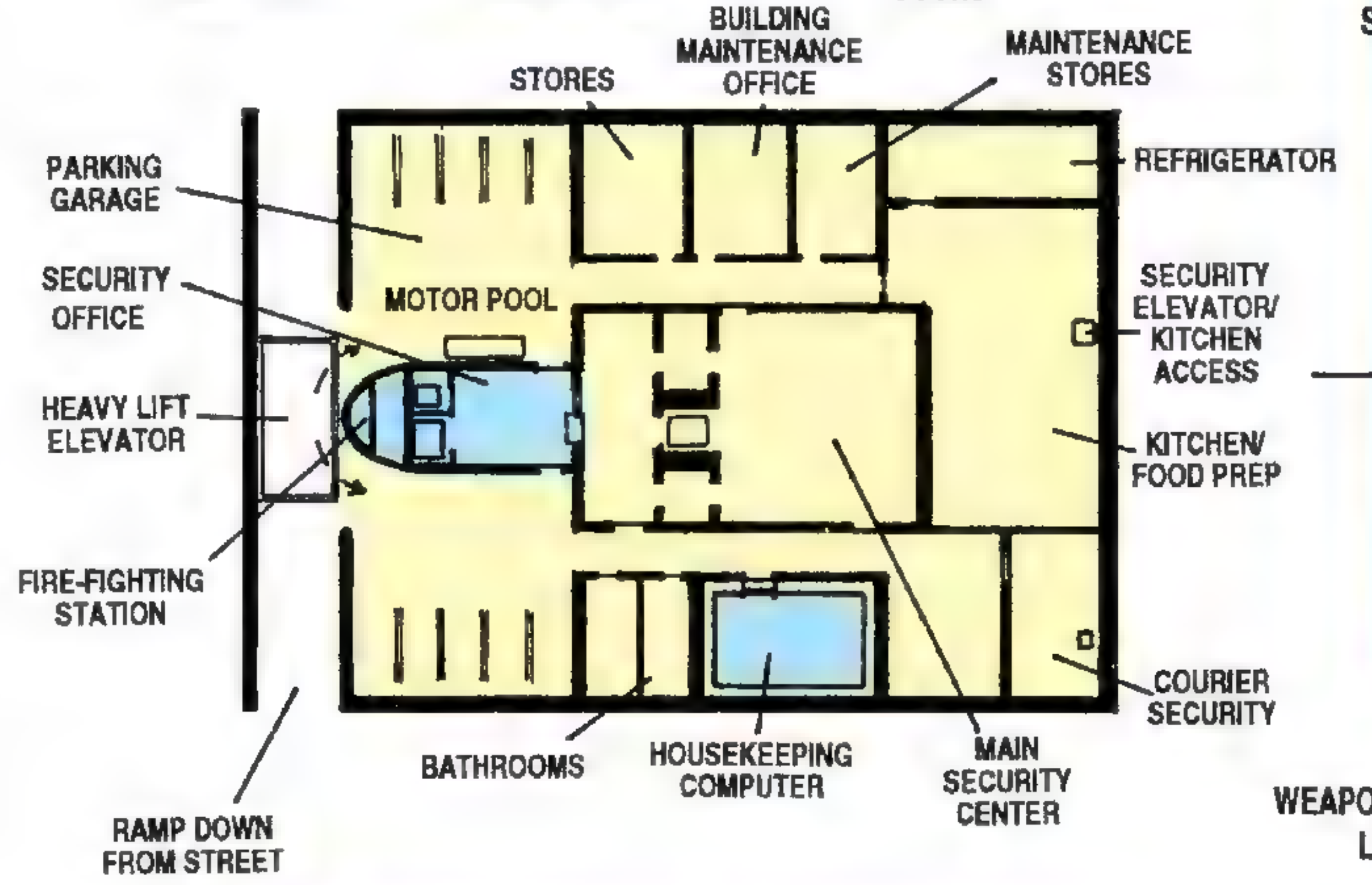
SPECIAL BONUS FEATURE

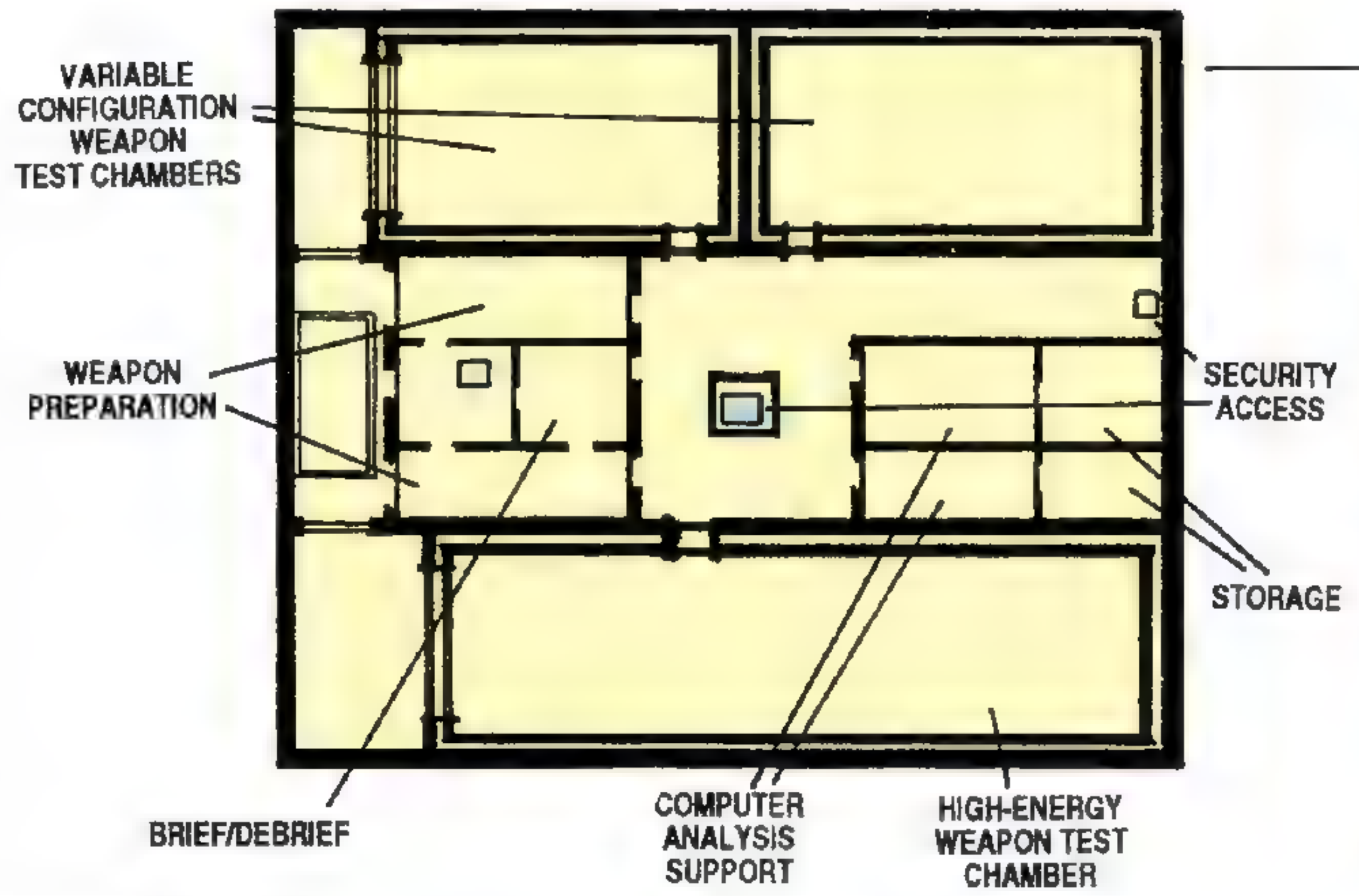
colors by NEL YOMTOV
everything else by ELIOT BROWN

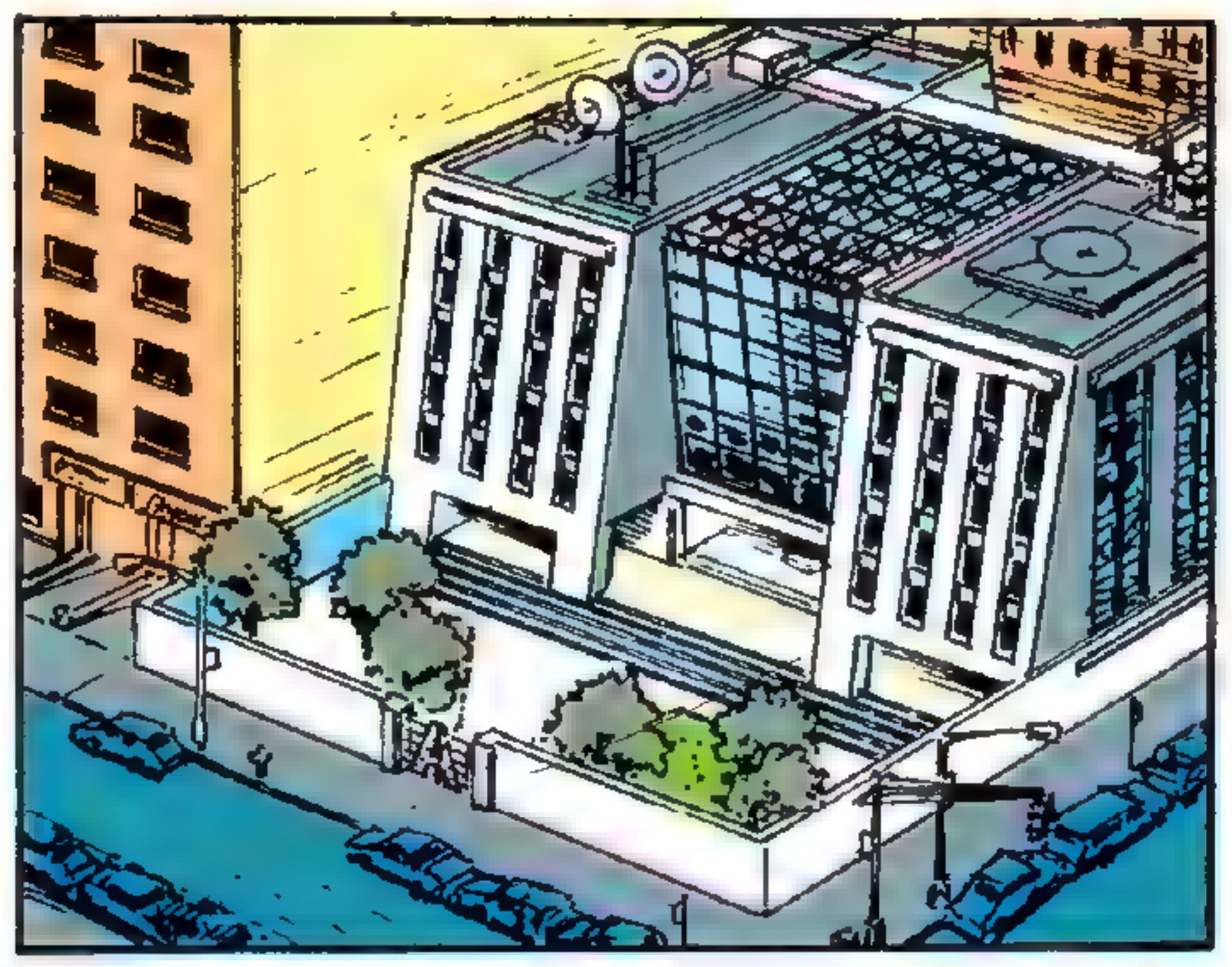

EXERCISE FACILITIES
BUILDING SUPPORT EQUIPMENT LEVEL
PARKING LEVEL/ SECURITY
EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT/ HIGH SPEED ACCESS TO SUBMARINE PEN
WEAPON TESTING LEVEL

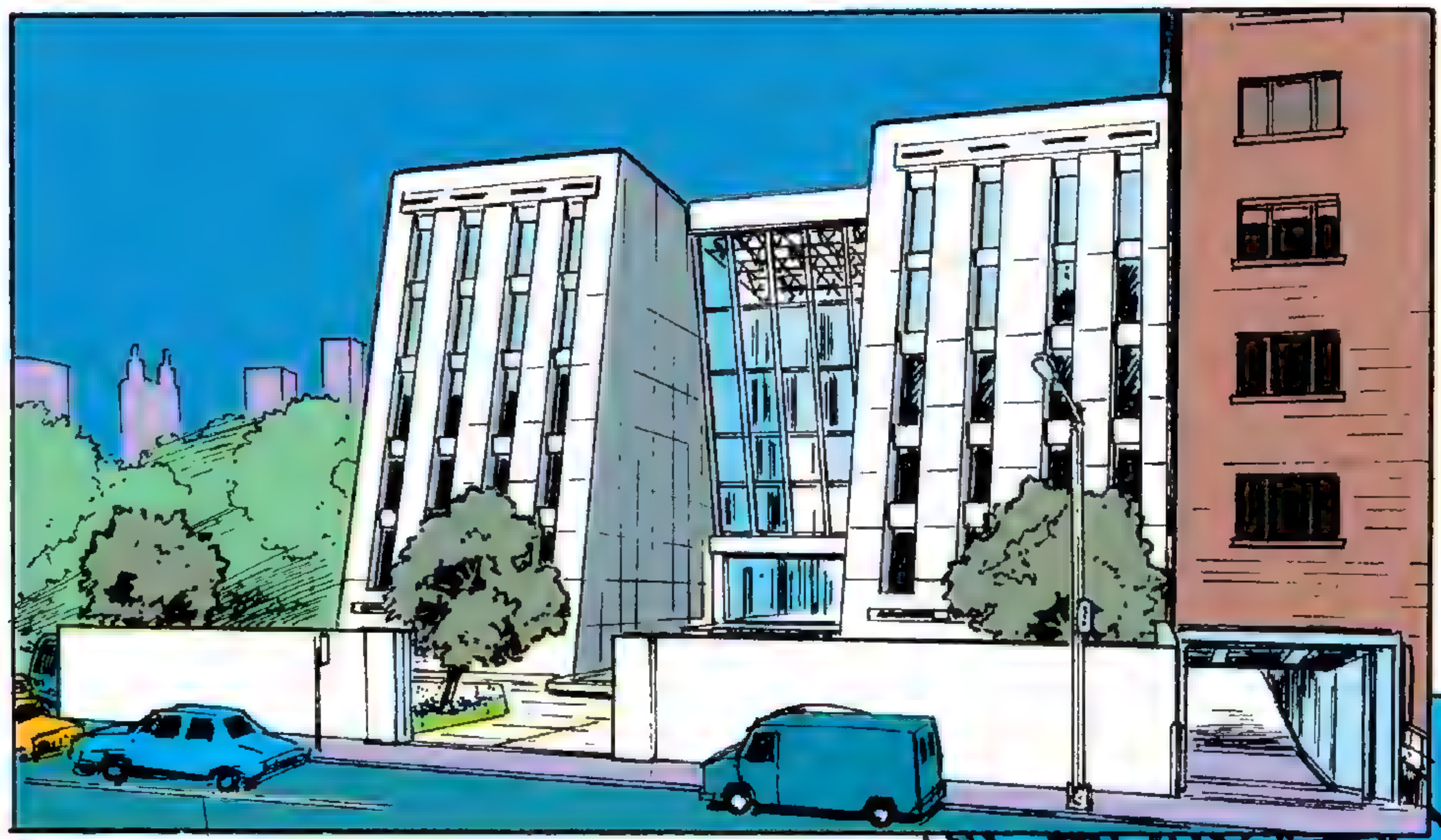
ABOVE GROUND: The Mansion also can provide guest offices, laboratories and support facilities as well as serve as host to numerous forms of entertainment. The top two floors can accommodate both long and short term guest quarters. Jarvis keeps an apartment on the southwest corner of the fourth floor.


GROUND FLOOR
CAPTAIN AMERICA'S OFFICE
SECRETARY
BATHROOMS
SIMON ROOM
KIRBY ROOM
PRIVATE OFFICE
CONFERENCE ROOM
SECURITY
PRIVATE OFFICE
SECRETARY
THOR'S OFFICE
FIRE EXIT
STAIRS TO UPPER BALCONY
SECURITY ELEVATOR
MAIN BALLROOM/ EXHIBITION SPACE
COURIER STATION
RAMP DOWN TO PARKING GARAGE
AIR CURTAIN
MAIN ENTRANCE
RETRACTABLE DOORS
RECEPTION/ SECURITY

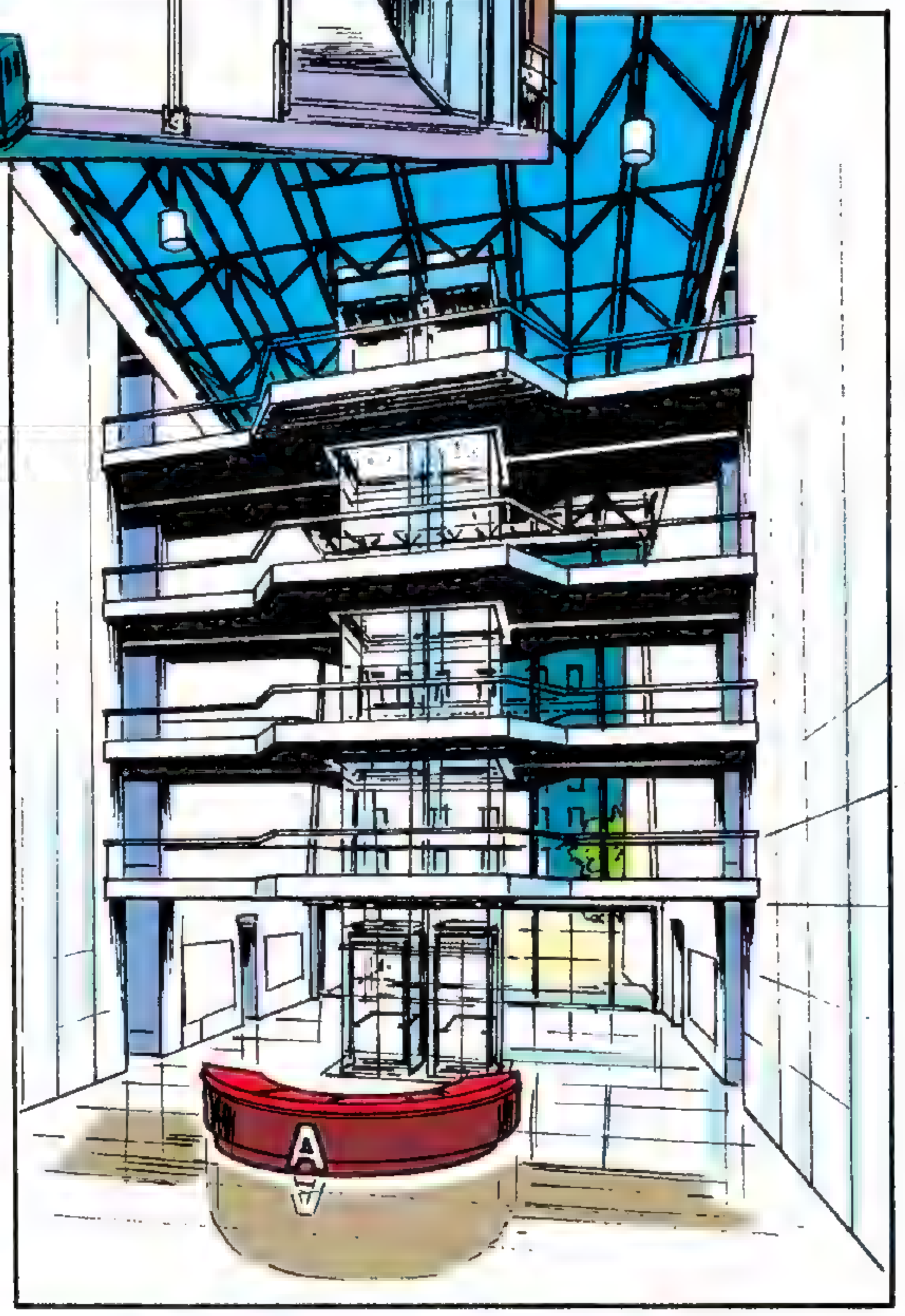

STORES
BUILDING MAINTENANCE OFFICE
MAINTENANCE STORES
REFRIGERATOR
PARKING GARAGE
SECURITY OFFICE
MOTOR POOL
HEAVY LIFT ELEVATOR
FIRE-FIGHTING STATION
SECURITY ELEVATOR/ KITCHEN ACCESS
KITCHEN/ FOOD PREP
COURIER SECURITY
BATHROOMS
HOUSEKEEPING COMPUTER
MAIN SECURITY CENTER
RAMP DOWN FROM STREET


VARIABLE CONFIGURATION WEAPON TEST CHAMBERS
WEAPON PREPARATION
SECURITY ACCESS
STORAGE
BRIEF/DEBRIEF
COMPUTER ANALYSIS SUPPORT
HIGH-ENERGY WEAPON TEST CHAMBER



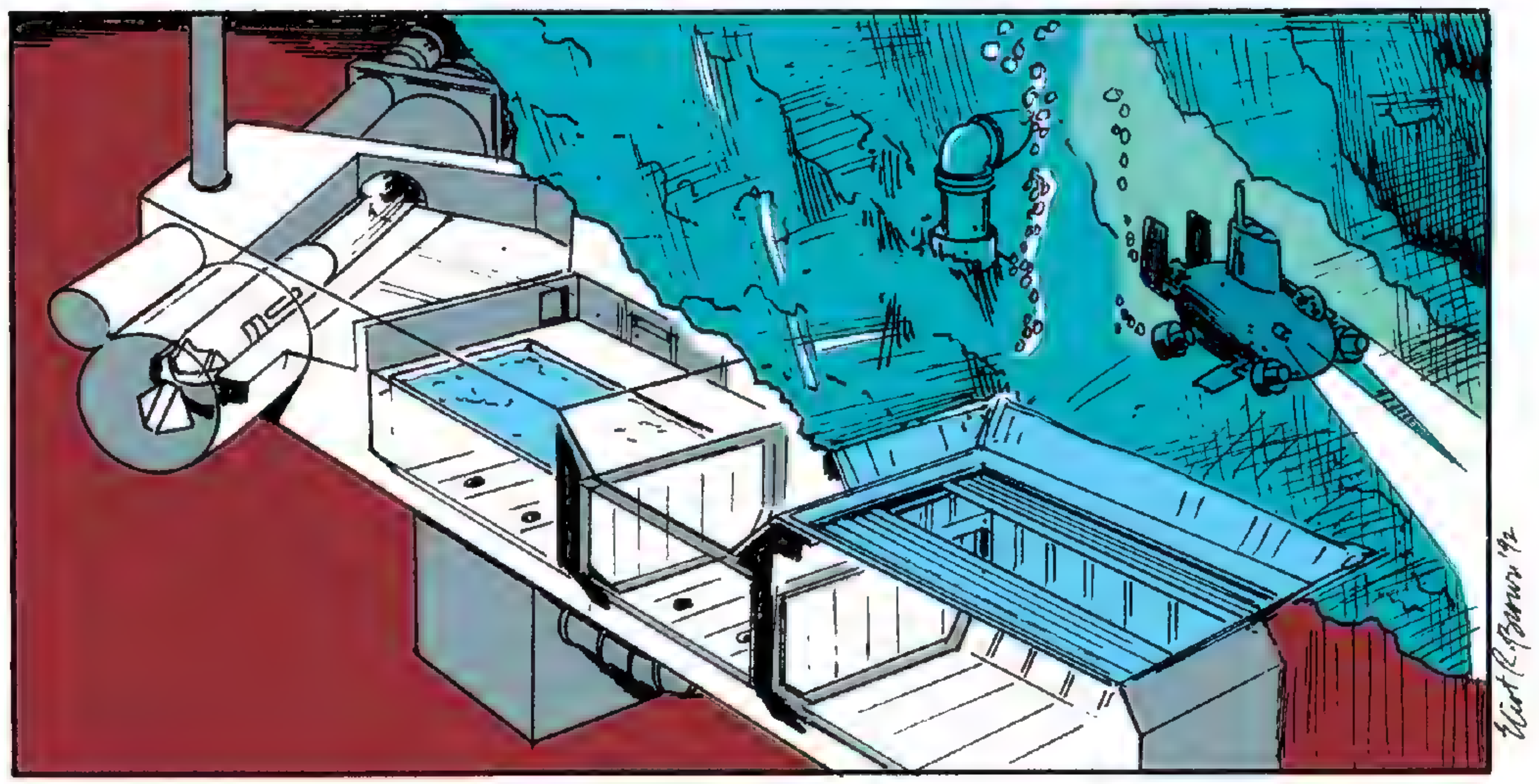


THE 70TH STREET ENTRANCE



INSIDE THE MAIN 71ST STREET ENTRANCE

BELOW GROUND: The submarine pen is reached by the magnetic-levitation shuttle located 350 feet below ground. The pen can accommodate submersible vehicles up to 85 feet long and 45 feet high. The submarine exit doors are located in the center of the East River channel. Simple maintenance can be performed and several varieties of fuel are stored. Below the pen is a series of high-pressure air and water pumps that allow the submersible garage to act as a dry dock and also maintain air pressure so far below sea level.

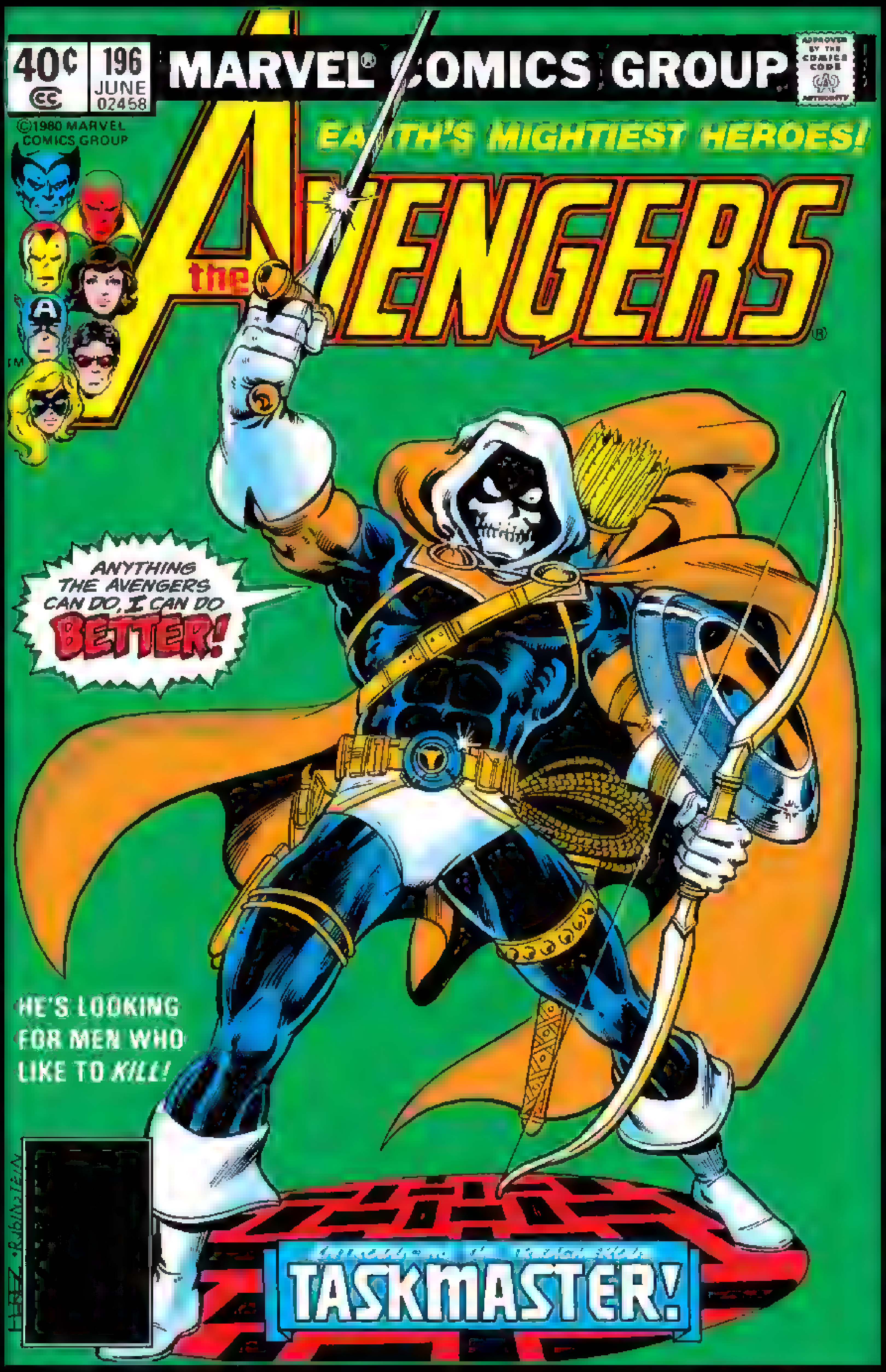


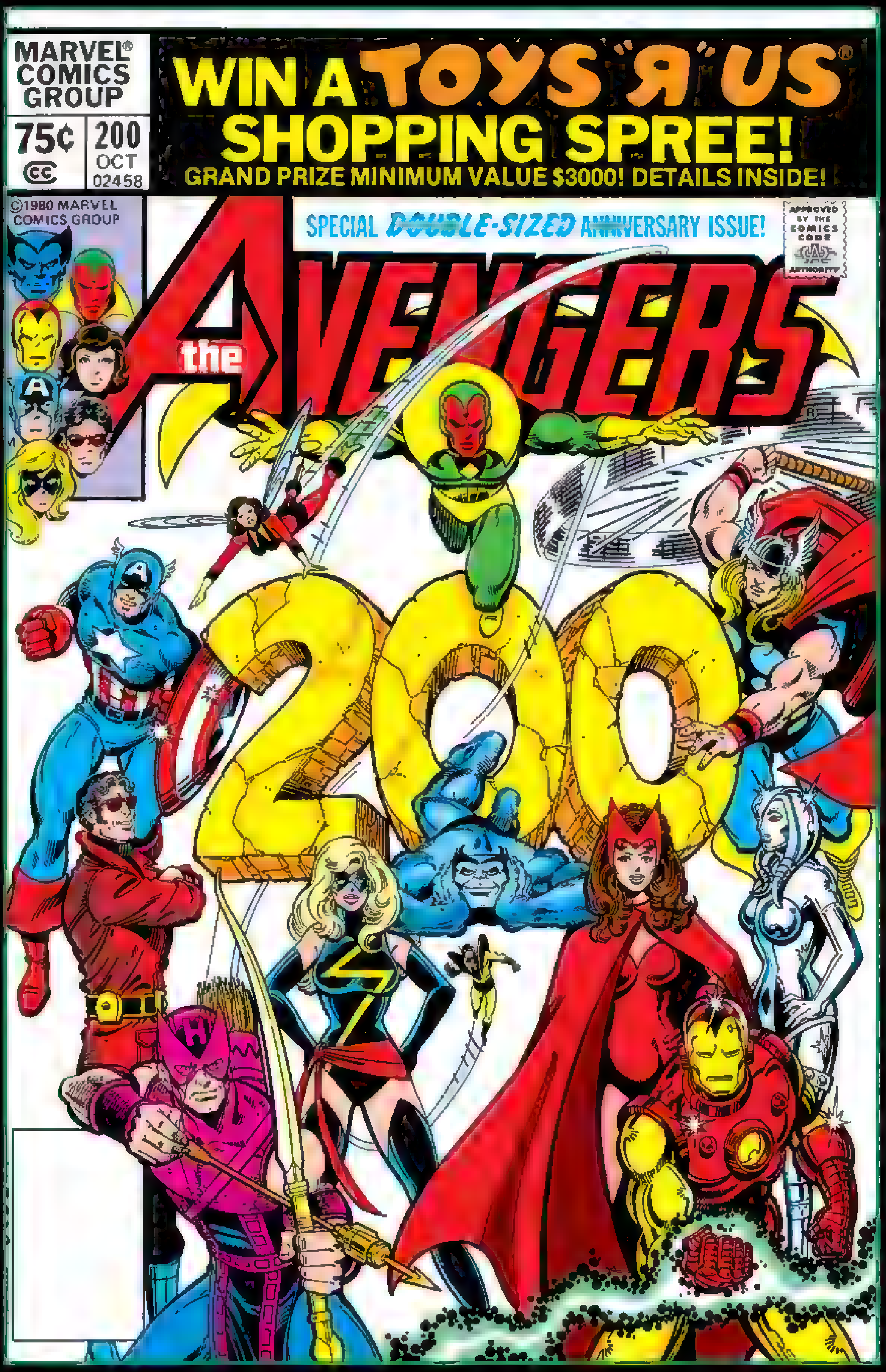
AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
35¢ 175 SEPT 02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
THE AVENGERS
FROM WHENCE CAME... THE ENEMY?

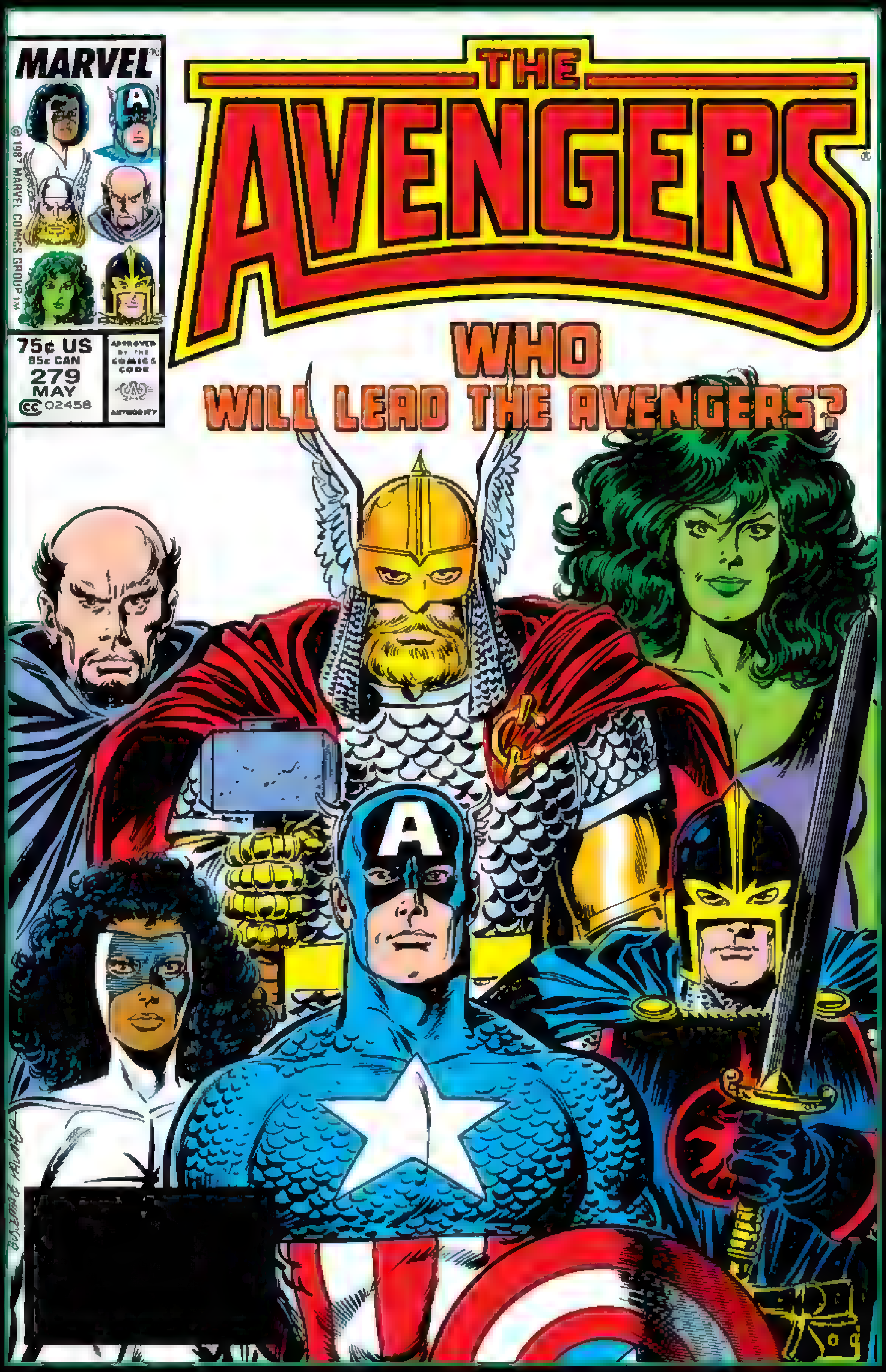
40¢ 187 SEPT 02458
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
©1979 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
THE AVENGERS
CAPTAIN AMERICA! Ms MARVEL! THE FALCON! QUICKSILVER! THE WASP! WONDER MAN! ALL AT THE MERCY OF...
THE WITCH ON WUNDAGORE MOUNTAIN!

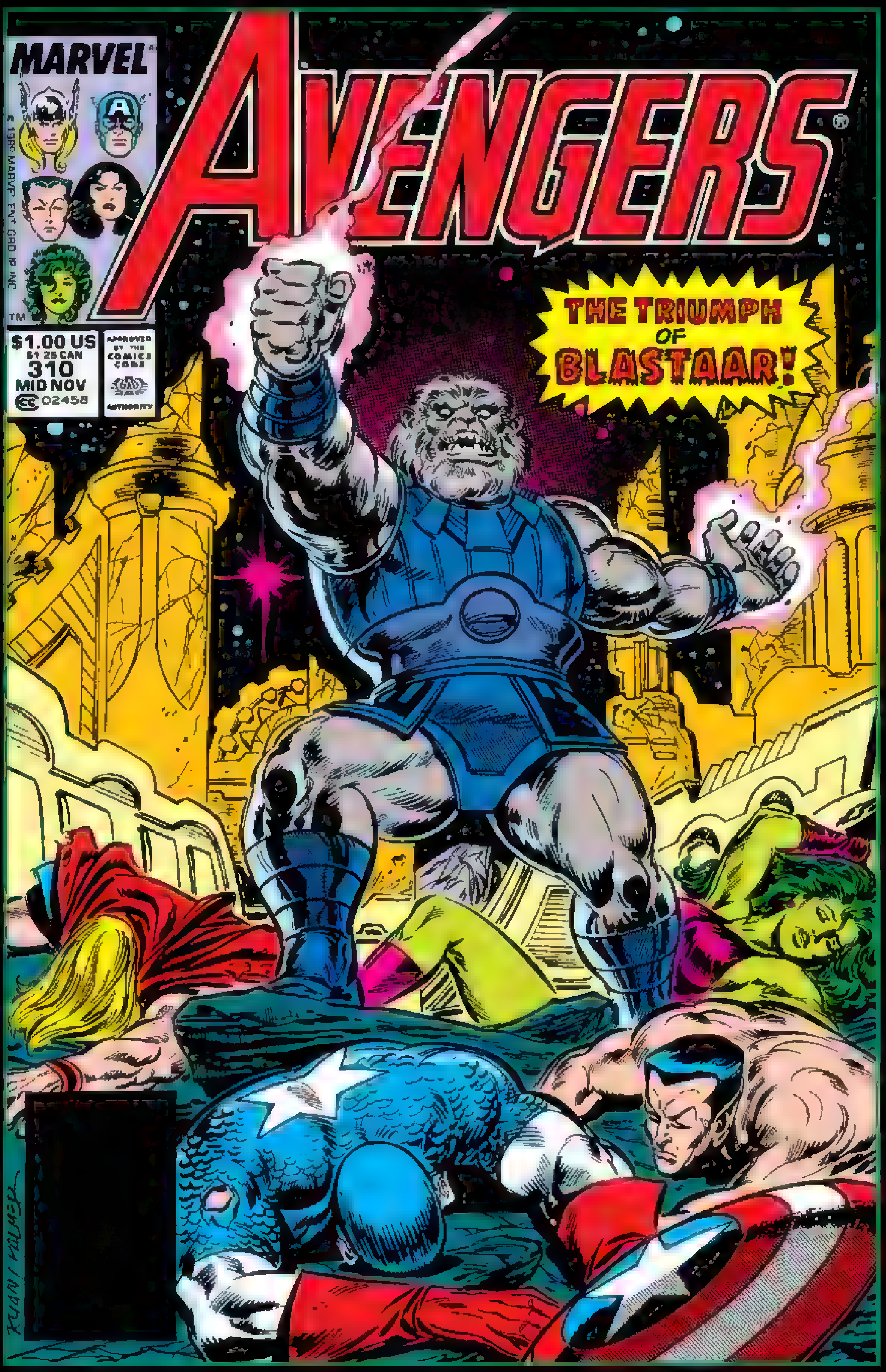
60¢ 225 NOV 02458
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE AVENGERS
AT LAST-- THE BLACK KNIGHT

MARVEL
THE AVENGERS
MC
ON LATE NIGHT WITH DAVID LETTERMAN!
60¢ 239 JAN 02458
...AND WE'RE GOING TO HAVE MORE FUN THAN EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE!
BEWARE


40¢ 196 JUNE 02458
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
©1980 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
ANYTHING THE AVENGERS CAN DO, I CAN DO BETTER!
HE'S LOOKING FOR MEN WHO LIKE TO KILL!
INTRODUCING THE TREACHEROUS
TASKMASTER!

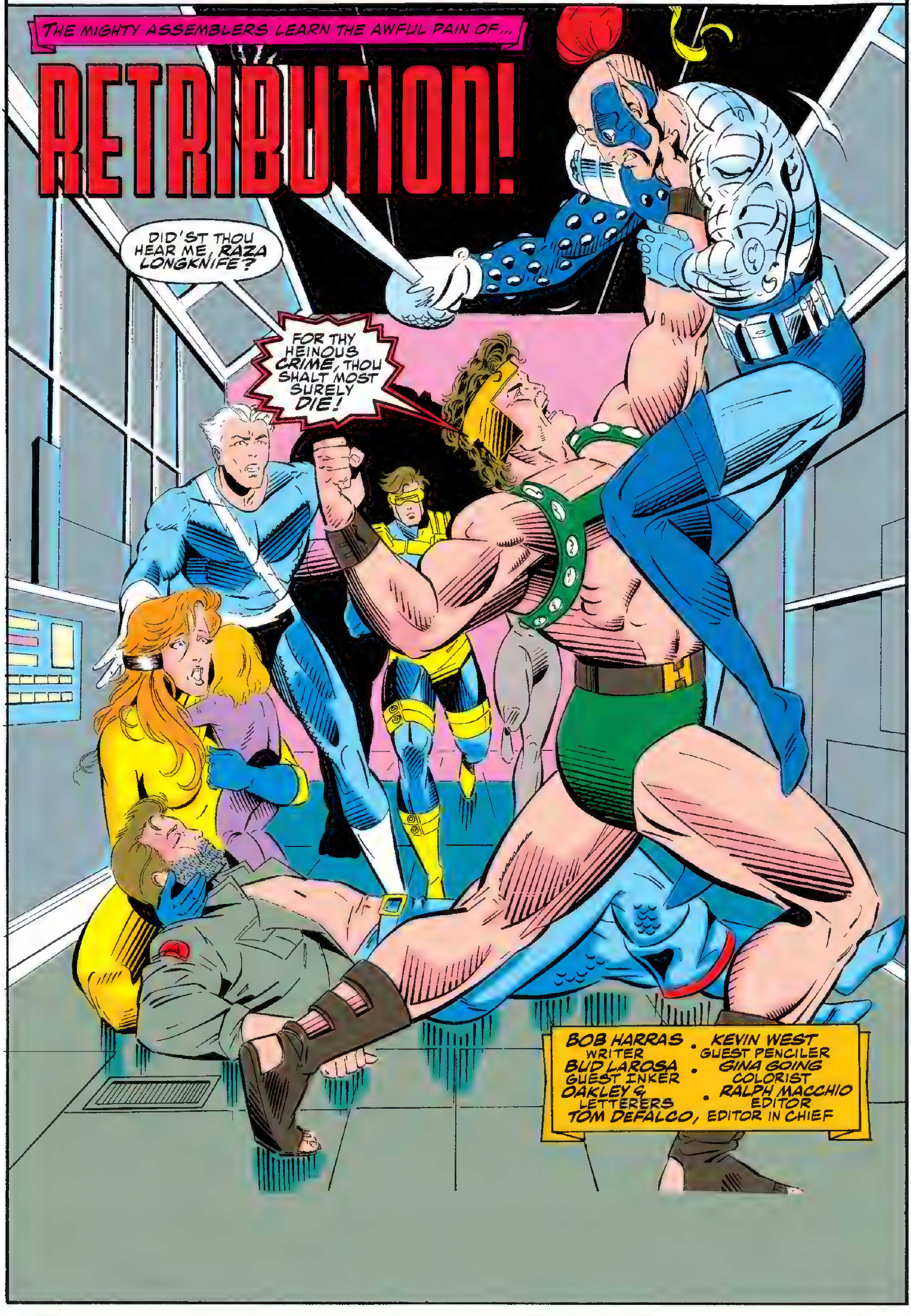

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
75¢ 200 OCT 02458
WIN A TOYS "R" US SHOPPING SPREE!
GRAND PRIZE MINIMUM VALUE $3000! DETAILS INSIDE!
©1980 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
SPECIAL DOUBLE-SIZED ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!
the AVENGERS
200


MARVEL
75¢ US 85¢ CAN 279 MAY 02458
THE AVENGERS
WHO WILL LEAD THE AVENGERS?

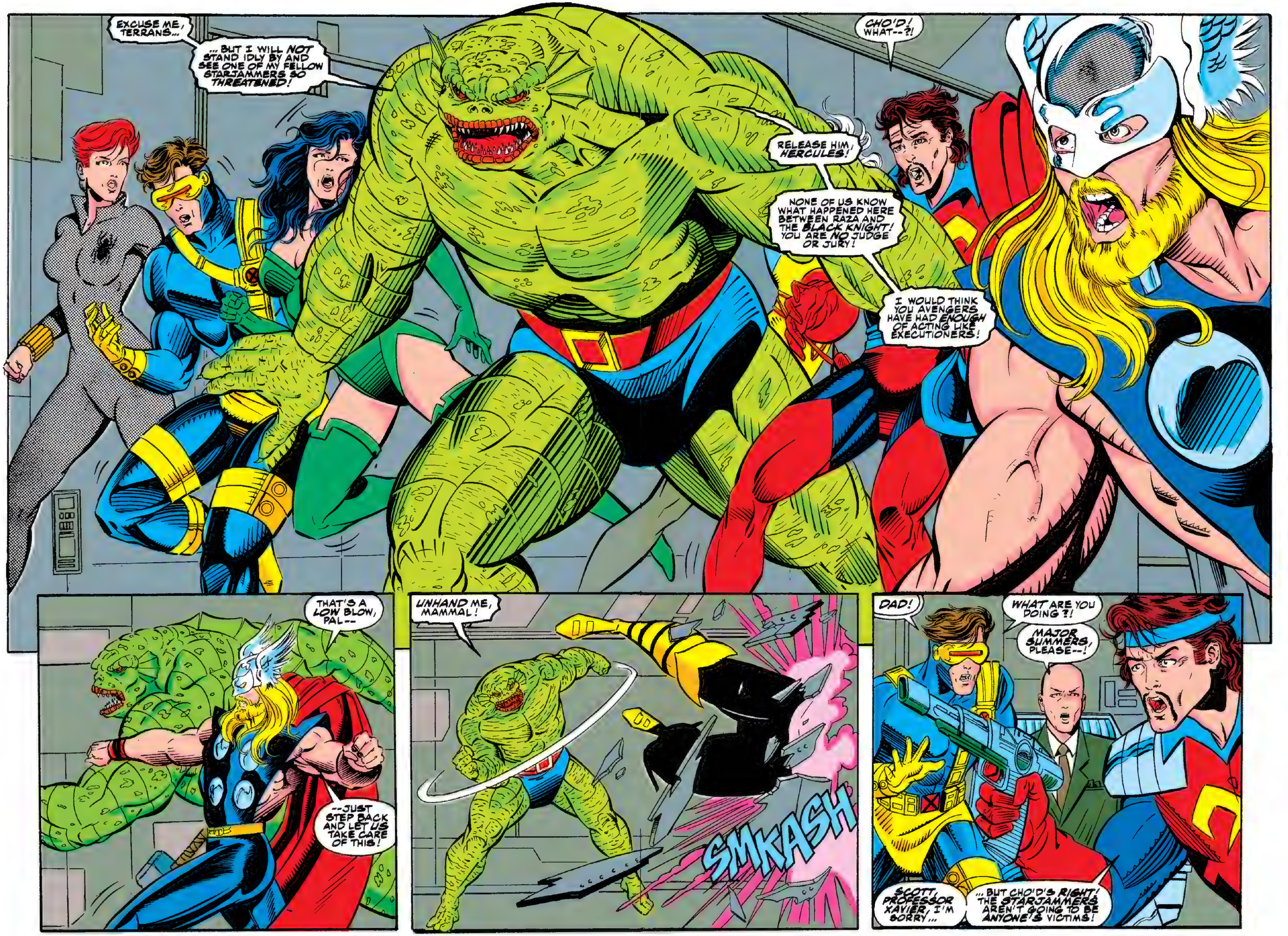

MARVEL
$1.00 US $1.25 CAN 310 MID NOV 02458
AVENGERS
THE TRIUMPH OF BLASTAAR!

MARVEL COMICS
© 1992 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
AVENGERS®
TM
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN/UK 70p
351
LATE AUG
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
RAZA'S RAGE!

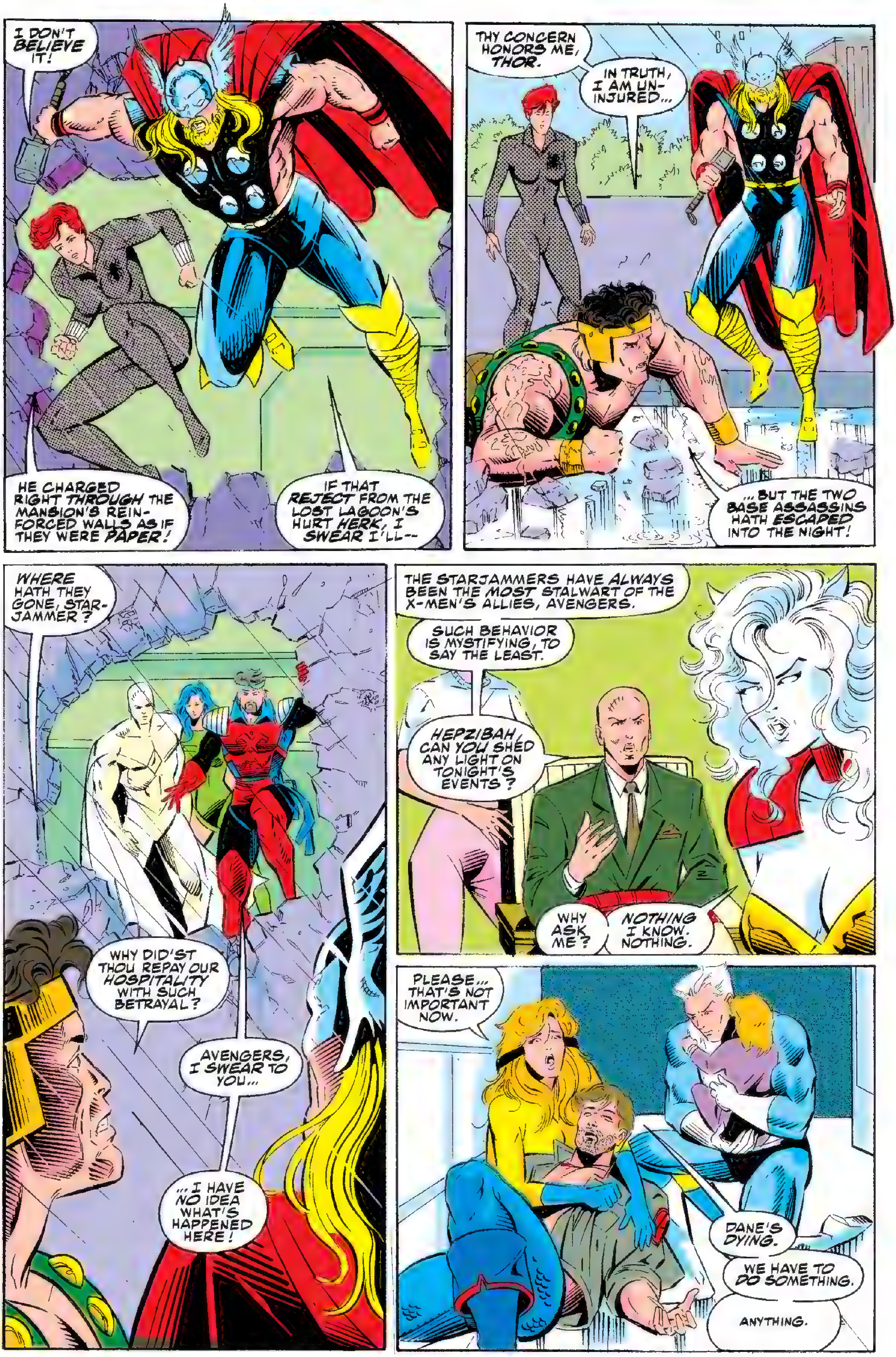
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

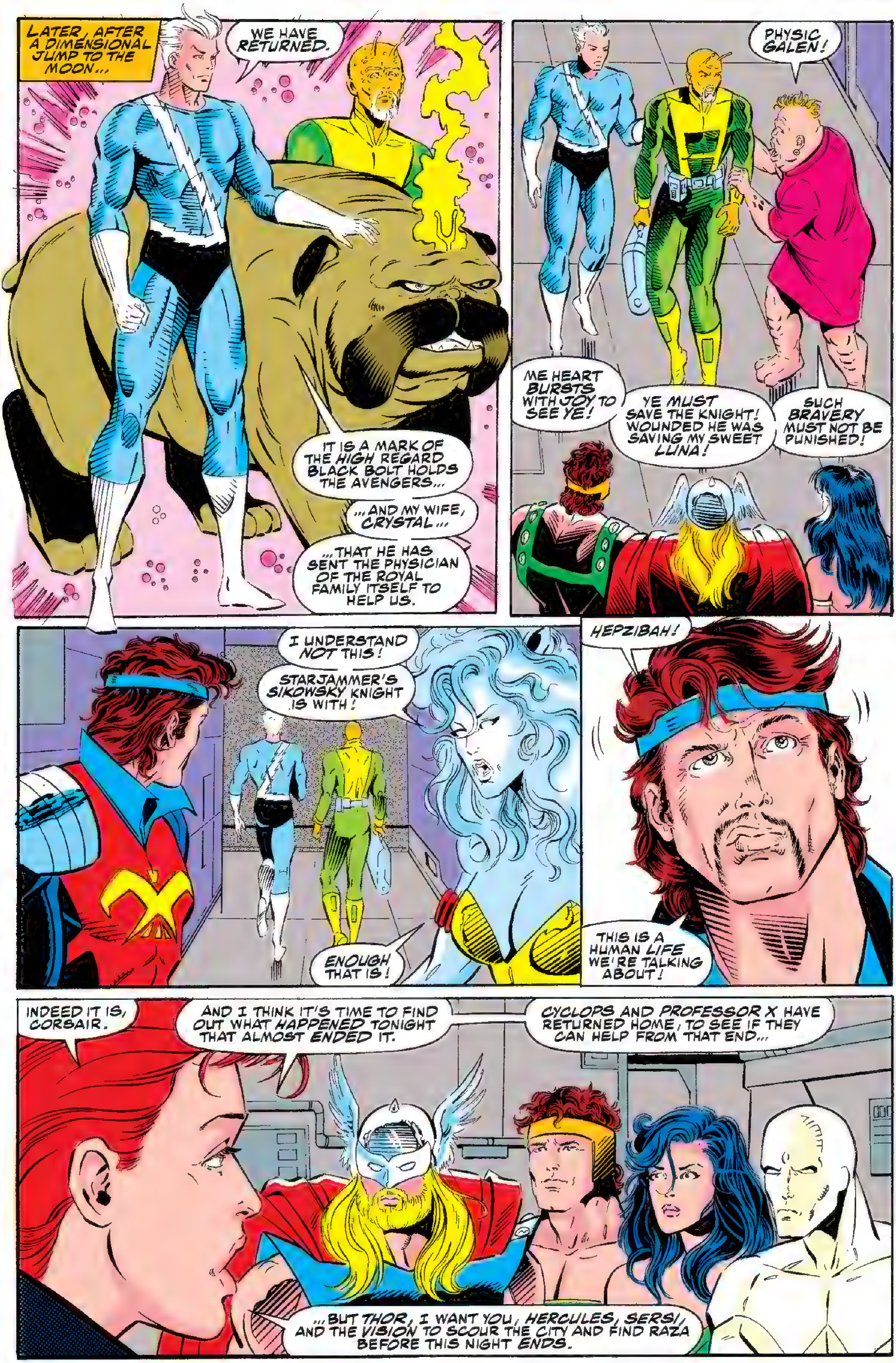

THE MIGHTY ASSEMBLERS LEARN THE AWFUL PAIN OF...
RETRIBUTION!
DID'ST THOU HEAR ME, RAZA LONGKNIFE?
FOR THY HEINOUS CRIME, THOU SHALT MOST SURELY DIE!

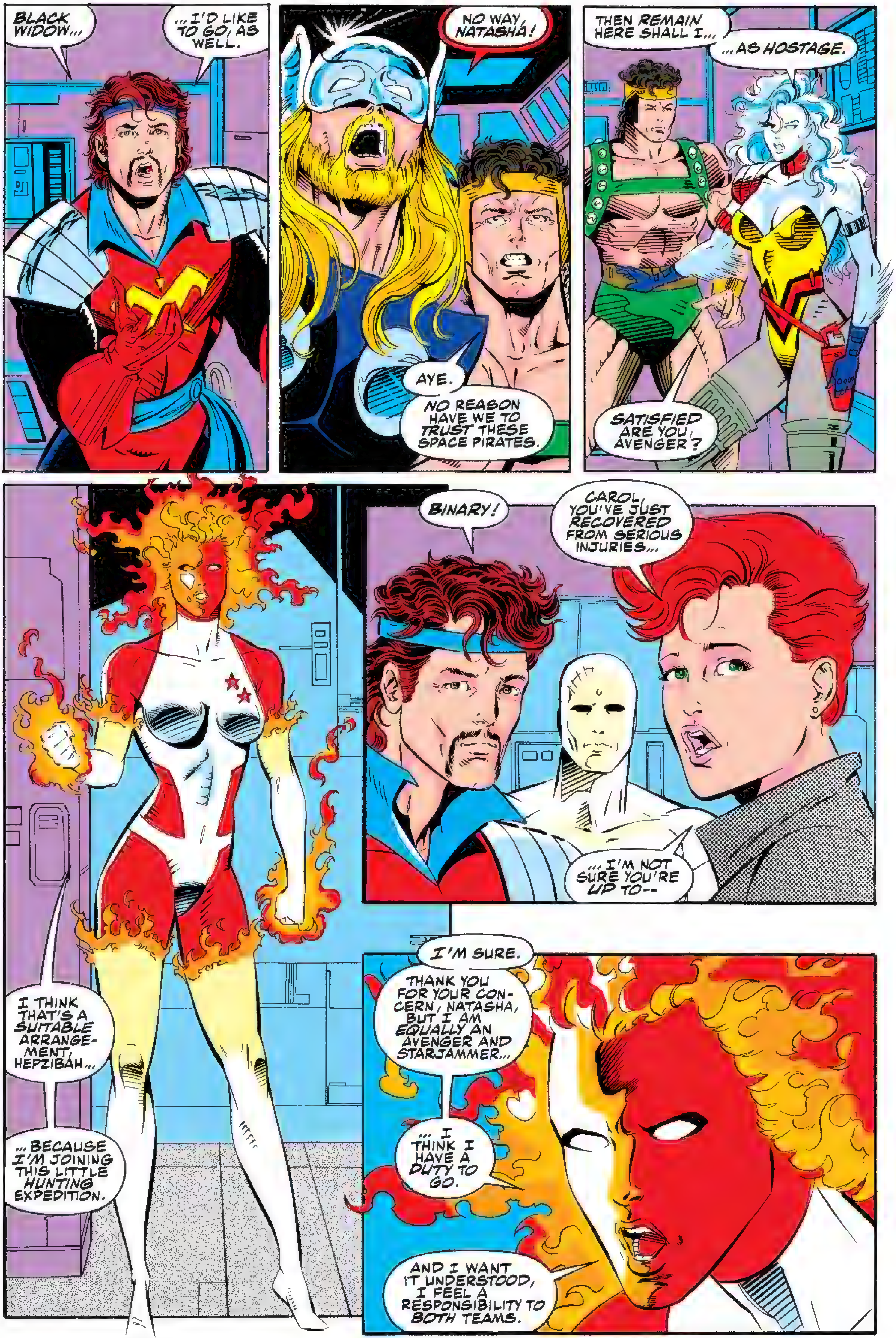
BOB HARRAS, WRITER • KEVIN WEST, GUEST PENCILER
BUD LAROSA, GUEST INKER • GINA GOING, COLORIST
OAKLEY & LETTERERS • RALPH MACCHIO, EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO, EDITOR IN CHIEF

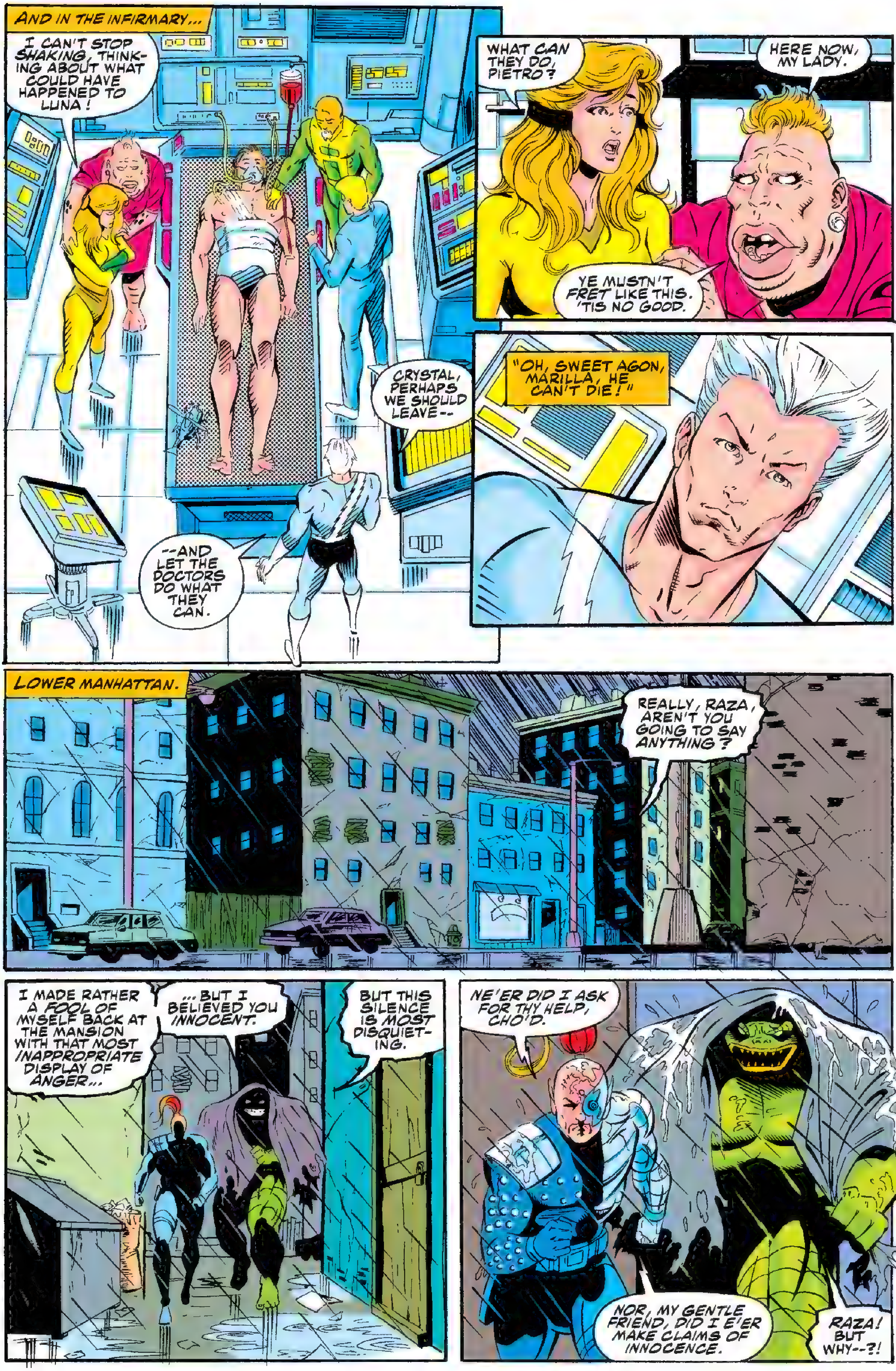

EXCUSE ME, TERRANS...
...BUT I WILL *NOT* STAND IDLY BY AND SEE ONE OF MY FELLOW STARJAMMERS SO *THREATENED!*
CHO'D! WHAT--?!
RELEASE HIM, *HERCULES!*
NONE OF US KNOW WHAT HAPPENED HERE BETWEEN RAZA AND THE *BLACK KNIGHT!* YOU ARE *NO* JUDGE OR JURY!
I WOULD THINK YOU AVENGERS HAVE HAD *ENOUGH* OF ACTING LIKE EXECUTIONERS!
THAT'S A *LOW* BLOW, PAL--
--JUST STEP BACK AND LET *US* TAKE CARE OF THIS!
UNHAND ME, MAMMAL!
SMKASH
DAD!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
MAJOR SUMMERS, PLEASE--!
SCOTT, PROFESSOR XAVIER, I'M SORRY...
...BUT CHO'D'S *RIGHT!* THE *STARJAMMERS* AREN'T *GOING* TO BE *ANYONE'S* VICTIMS!

CONSIDERING IT IS OUR TEAMMATE WHO LIES BLEEDING, CORSAIR...
...I WOULD SUGGEST IT IS THE AVENGERS WHO HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED THIS EVENING.
ARRGHH!
I APOLOGIZE FOR THE PAIN MY INTANGIBILITY IS CAUSING YOU, BUT I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO FIRE YOUR WEAPON.
CORSAIR!
I'VE HAD QUITE ENOUGH OF THIS!
I GAVE YOU FAIR WARNING, OLYMPIAN...
...NOW RAZA COMES WITH ME!
KER-
SMASH!

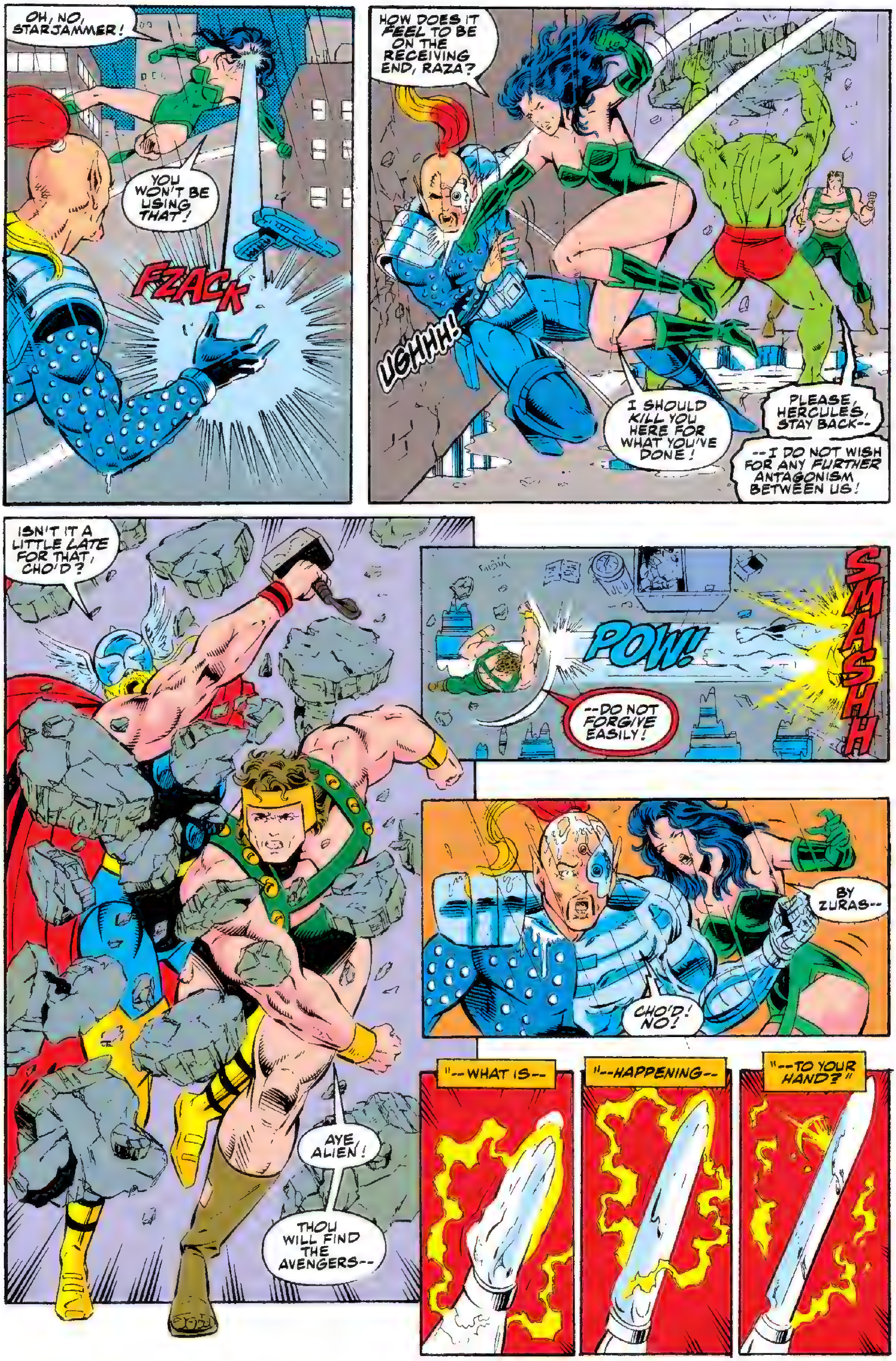

I DON'T *BELIEVE* IT!
HE CHARGED RIGHT *THROUGH* THE MANSION'S REINFORCED WALLS AS IF THEY WERE *PAPER!*
IF THAT *REJECT* FROM THE LOST LAGOON'S HURT *HERK*, I *SWEAR* I'LL--
THY CONCERN HONORS ME, *THOR.*
IN TRUTH, I AM UNINJURED...
...BUT THE TWO *BASE ASSASSINS* HATH *ESCAPED* INTO THE NIGHT!
WHERE HATH THEY GONE, STARJAMMER?
WHY DID'ST THOU REPAY OUR *HOSPITALITY* WITH SUCH BETRAYAL?
AVENGERS, *I SWEAR* TO YOU...
...I HAVE *NO IDEA* WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE!
THE STARJAMMERS HAVE *ALWAYS* BEEN THE *MOST* STALWART OF THE X-MEN'S ALLIES, AVENGERS.
SUCH BEHAVIOR IS MYSTIFYING, TO SAY THE LEAST.
HEPZIBAH, CAN *YOU* SHED ANY LIGHT ON TONIGHT'S EVENTS?
WHY ASK ME?
NOTHING I KNOW. NOTHING.
PLEASE... THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT NOW.
DANE'S *DYING.*
WE HAVE TO *DO* SOMETHING.
ANYTHING.

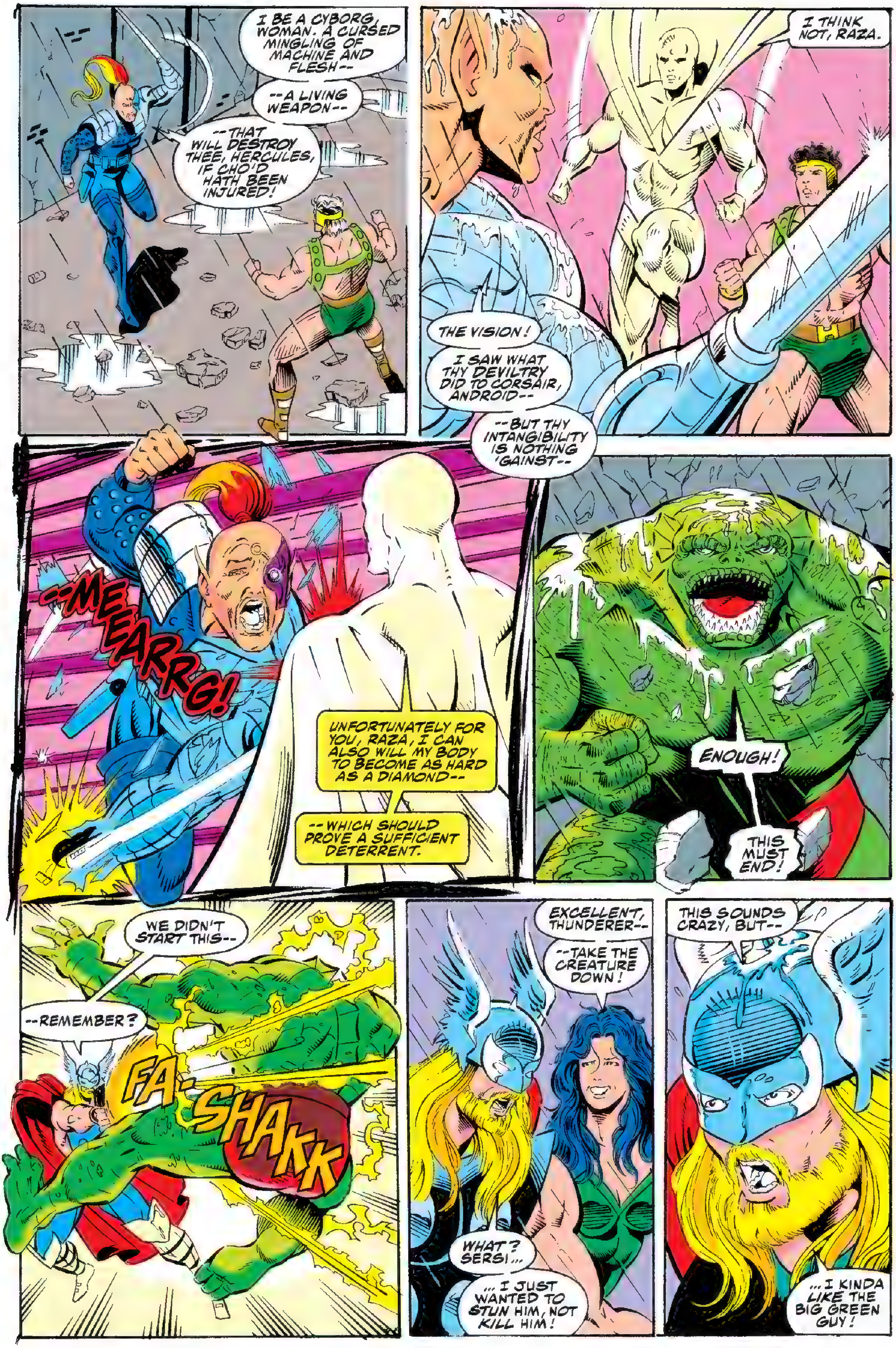

LATER, AFTER A DIMENSIONAL JUMP TO THE MOON...
WE HAVE RETURNED.
IT IS A MARK OF THE HIGH REGARD BLACK BOLT HOLDS THE AVENGERS...
...AND MY WIFE, CRYSTAL...
...THAT HE HAS SENT THE PHYSICIAN OF THE ROYAL FAMILY ITSELF TO HELP US.
PHYSIC GALEN!
ME HEART BURSTS WITH JOY TO SEE YE!
YE MUST SAVE THE KNIGHT! WOUNDED HE WAS SAVING MY SWEET LUNA!
SUCH BRAVERY MUST NOT BE PUNISHED!
I UNDERSTAND NOT THIS!
STARJAMMER'S SIKOWSKY KNIGHT IS WITH!
ENOUGH THAT IS!
HEPZIBAH!
THIS IS A HUMAN LIFE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!
INDEED IT IS, CORSAIR.
AND I THINK IT'S TIME TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT THAT ALMOST ENDED IT.
CYCLOPS AND PROFESSOR X HAVE RETURNED HOME, TO SEE IF THEY CAN HELP FROM THAT END...
...BUT THOR, I WANT YOU, HERCULES, SERSI, AND THE VISION TO SCOUR THE CITY AND FIND RAZA BEFORE THIS NIGHT ENDS.

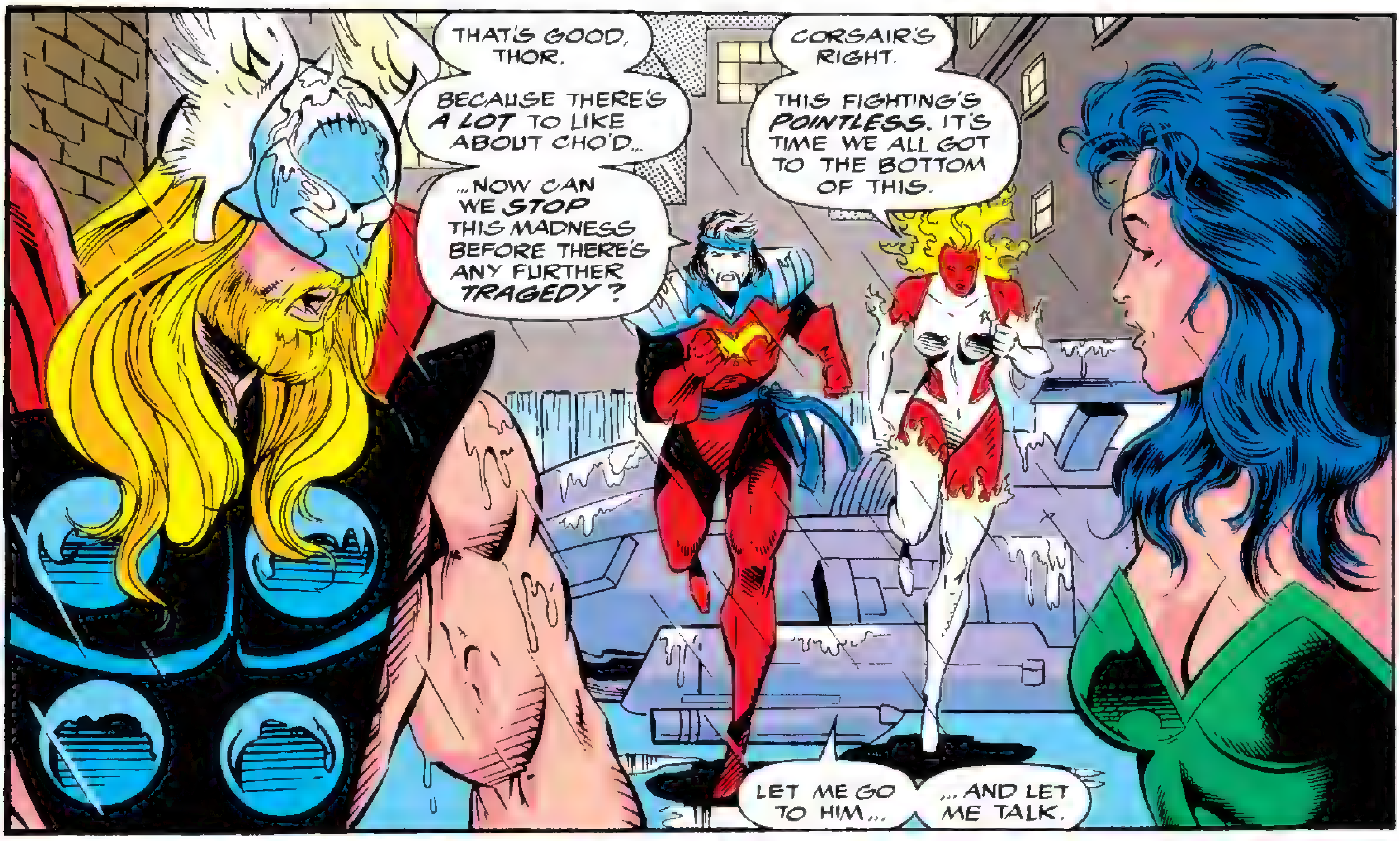

BLACK WIDOW...
...I'D LIKE TO GO, AS WELL.
NO WAY, NATASHA!
AYE.
NO REASON HAVE WE TO TRUST THESE SPACE PIRATES.
THEN REMAIN HERE SHALL I...
...AS HOSTAGE.
SATISFIED ARE YOU, AVENGER?
I THINK THAT'S A SUITABLE ARRANGEMENT, HEPZIBAH...
...BECAUSE I'M JOINING THIS LITTLE HUNTING EXPEDITION.
BINARY!
CAROL, YOU'VE JUST RECOVERED FROM SERIOUS INJURIES...
...I'M NOT SURE YOU'RE UP TO--
I'M SURE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN, NATASHA, BUT I AM EQUALLY AN AVENGER AND STARJAMMER...
...I THINK I HAVE A DUTY TO GO.
AND I WANT IT UNDERSTOOD, I FEEL A RESPONSIBILITY TO BOTH TEAMS.

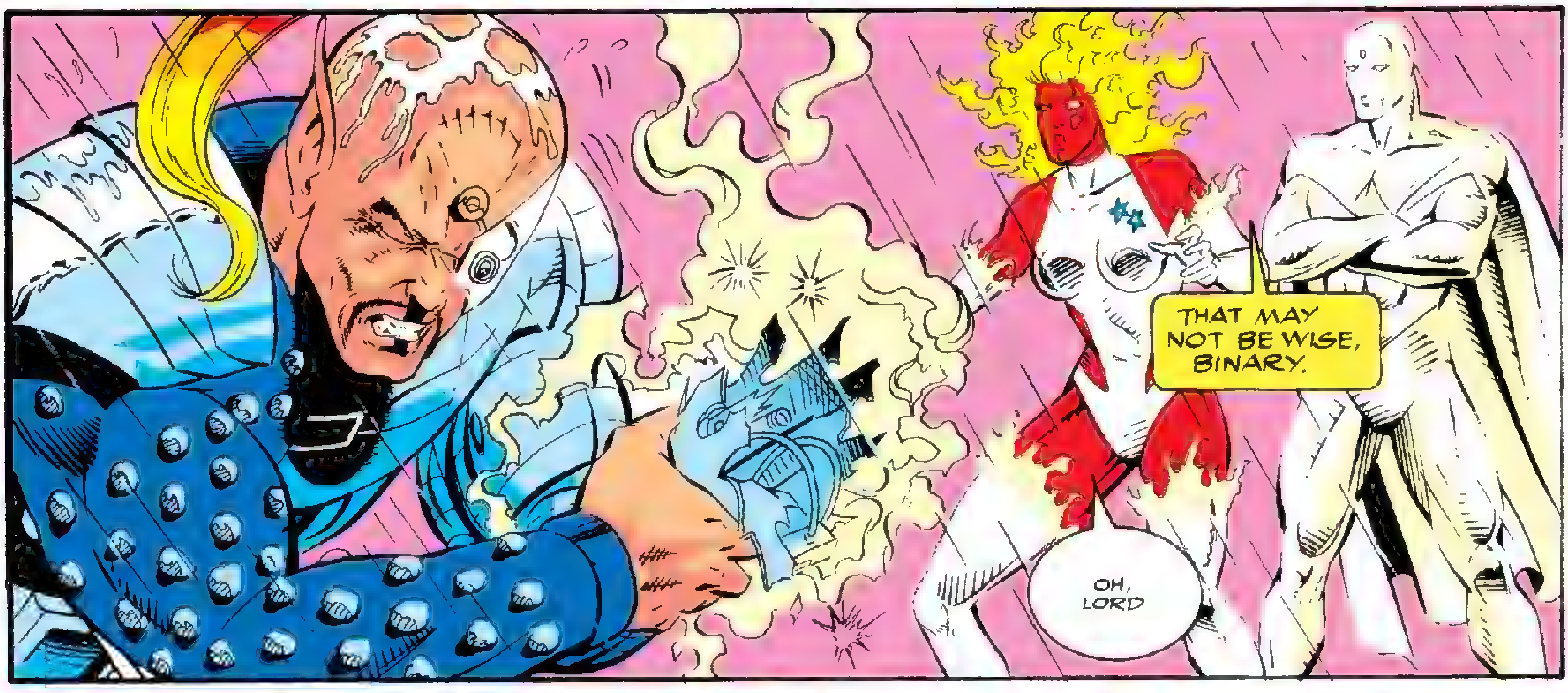

AND IN THE INFIRMARY...
I CAN'T STOP SHAKING, THINKING ABOUT WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO LUNA!
CRYSTAL, PERHAPS WE SHOULD LEAVE--
--AND LET THE DOCTORS DO WHAT THEY CAN.
WHAT CAN THEY DO, PIETRO?
HERE NOW, MY LADY.
YE MUSTN'T FRET LIKE THIS. 'TIS NO GOOD.
"OH, SWEET AGON, MARILLA, HE CAN'T DIE!"
LOWER MANHATTAN.
REALLY, RAZA, AREN'T YOU GOING TO SAY ANYTHING?
I MADE RATHER A FOOL OF MYSELF BACK AT THE MANSION WITH THAT MOST INAPPROPRIATE DISPLAY OF ANGER...
...BUT I BELIEVED YOU INNOCENT.
BUT THIS SILENCE IS MOST DISQUIETING.
NE'ER DID I ASK FOR THY HELP, CHO'D.
NOR, MY GENTLE FRIEND, DID I E'ER MAKE CLAIMS OF INNOCENCE.
RAZA! BUT WHY--?!

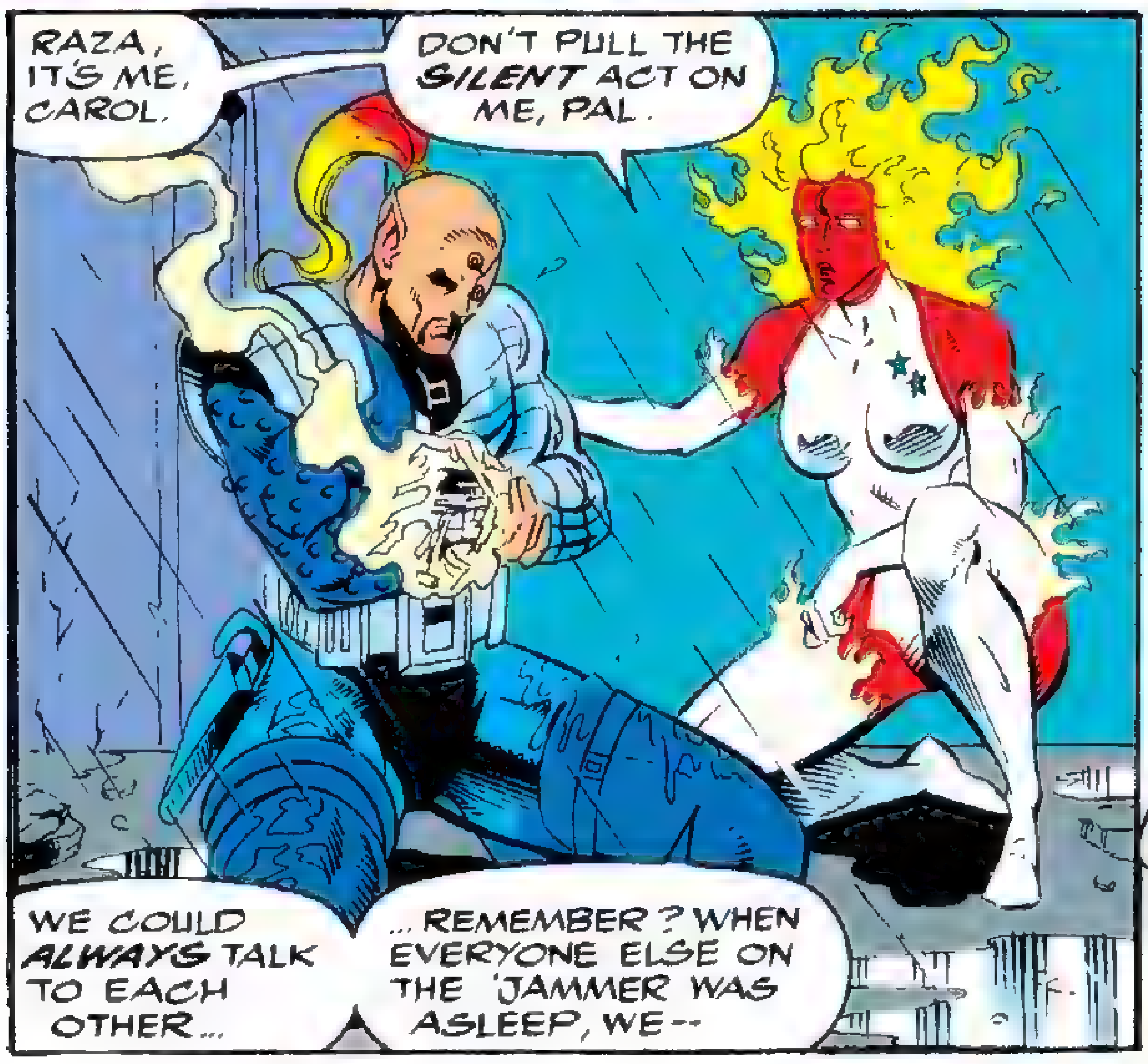
I LET A MADNESS O'ERTAKE ME...
...A DESPERATE SELFISHNESS THAT DESTROYED ALL SENSE OF REASON WITHIN MY SOUL.
SOMETHING WAS TAKEN FROM ME LONG AGO, CHO'D... SOMETHING I LOVED MOST DEARLY...
...AND I THOUGHT I WOULD'ST DO ANYTHING TO GET IT BACK.
I WAS WRONG.
CHO'D, LOOK SHARP--
"--THEY'VE FOUND US!"
GIVE IT UP, RAZA--
--'CAUSE YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY AGAIN!

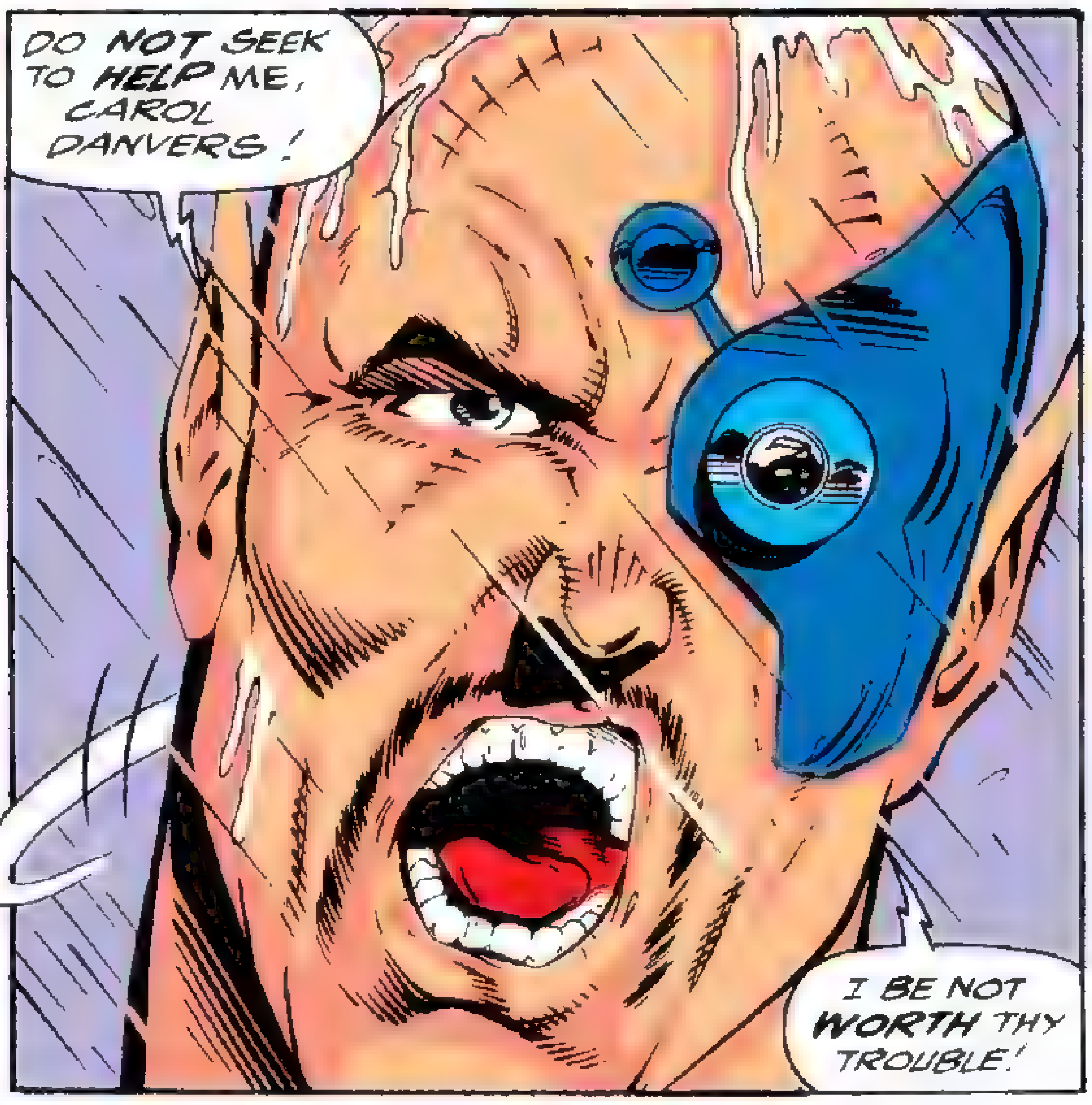

OH, NO, STARJAMMER!
YOU WON'T BE USING THAT!
FZACK
HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE ON THE RECEIVING END, RAZA?
UGHHH!
I SHOULD KILL YOU HERE FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
PLEASE, HERCULES, STAY BACK--
--I DO NOT WISH FOR ANY FURTHER ANTAGONISM BETWEEN US!
ISN'T IT A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT, CHO'D?
AYE ALIEN!
THOU WILL FIND THE AVENGERS--
POW!
SMASHH
--DO NOT FORGIVE EASILY!
BY ZURAS--
CHO'D! NO!
"--WHAT IS--
"--HAPPENING--
"--TO YOUR HAND?"

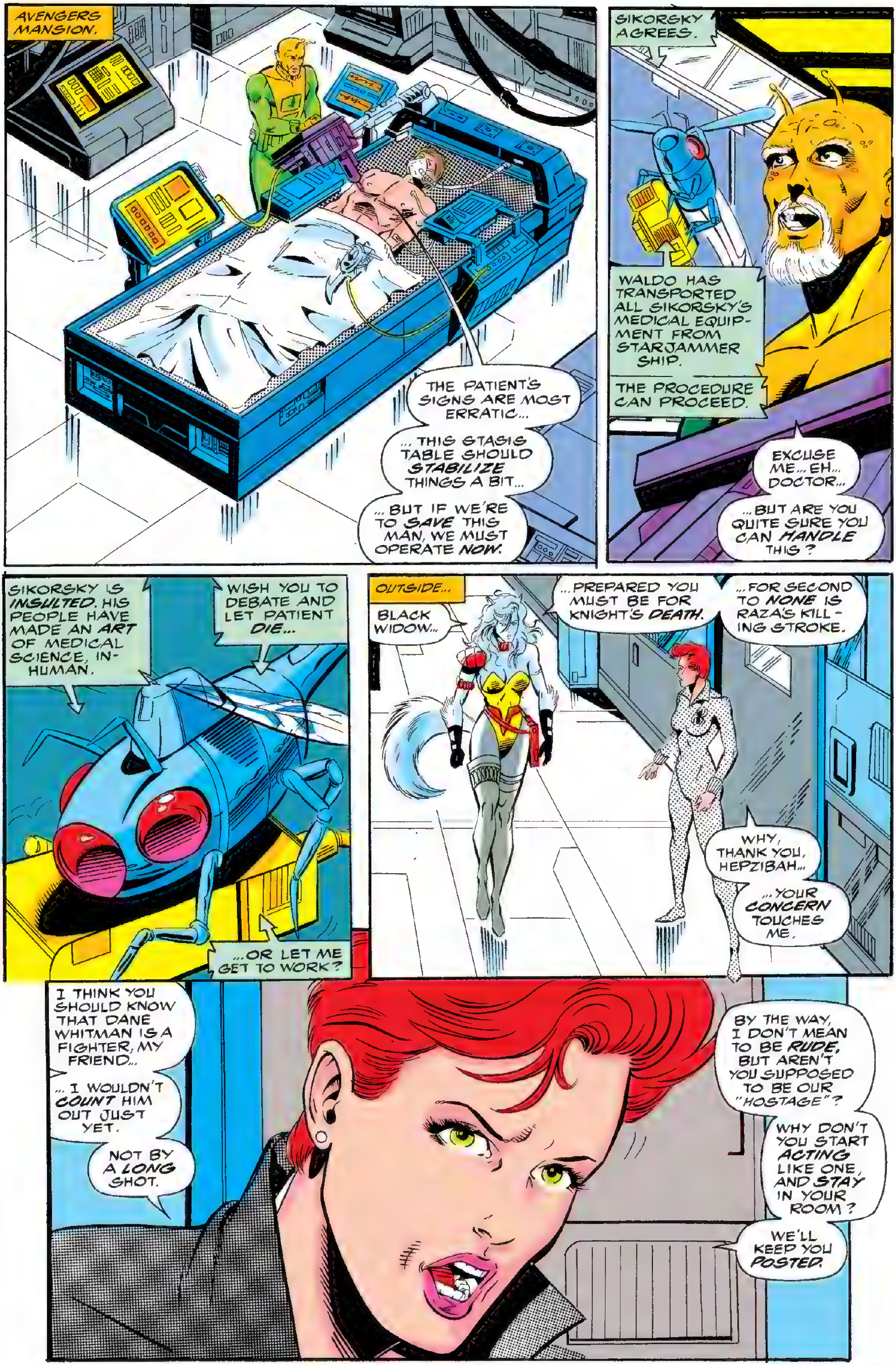

I BE A CYBORG, WOMAN. A CURSED MINGLING OF MACHINE AND FLESH--
--A LIVING WEAPON--
--THAT WILL DESTROY THEE, HERCULES, IF CHO'D HATH BEEN INJURED!
I THINK NOT, RAZA.
THE VISION!
I SAW WHAT THY DEVILTRY DID TO CORSAIR, ANDROID--
--BUT THY INTANGIBILITY IS NOTHING 'GAINST--
--MEEARRRG!
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, RAZA, I CAN ALSO WILL MY BODY TO BECOME AS HARD AS A DIAMOND--
--WHICH SHOULD PROVE A SUFFICIENT DETERRENT.
ENOUGH!
THIS MUST END!
WE DIDN'T START THIS--
--REMEMBER?
FA-SHAKK
EXCELLENT, THUNDERER--
--TAKE THE CREATURE DOWN!
WHAT? SERSI...
...I JUST WANTED TO STUN HIM, NOT KILL HIM!
THIS SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT--
...I KINDA LIKE THE BIG GREEN GUY!

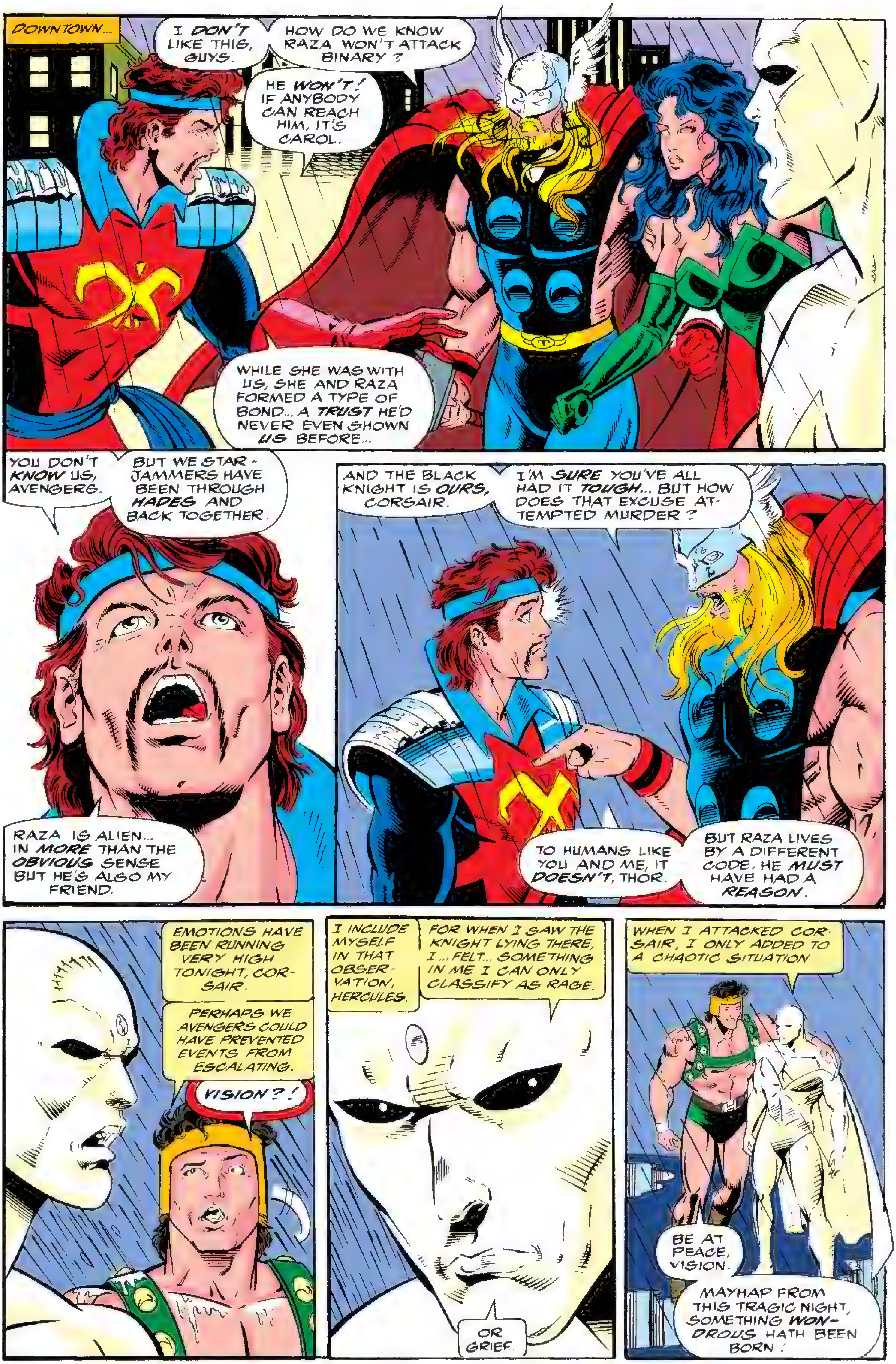

THAT'S GOOD, THOR.
BECAUSE THERE'S *A LOT* TO LIKE ABOUT CHO'D...
...NOW CAN WE *STOP* THIS MADNESS BEFORE THERE'S ANY FURTHER *TRAGEDY*?
CORSAIR'S RIGHT.
THIS FIGHTING'S *POINTLESS*. IT'S TIME WE ALL GOT TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS.
LET ME GO TO HIM...
...AND LET ME TALK.

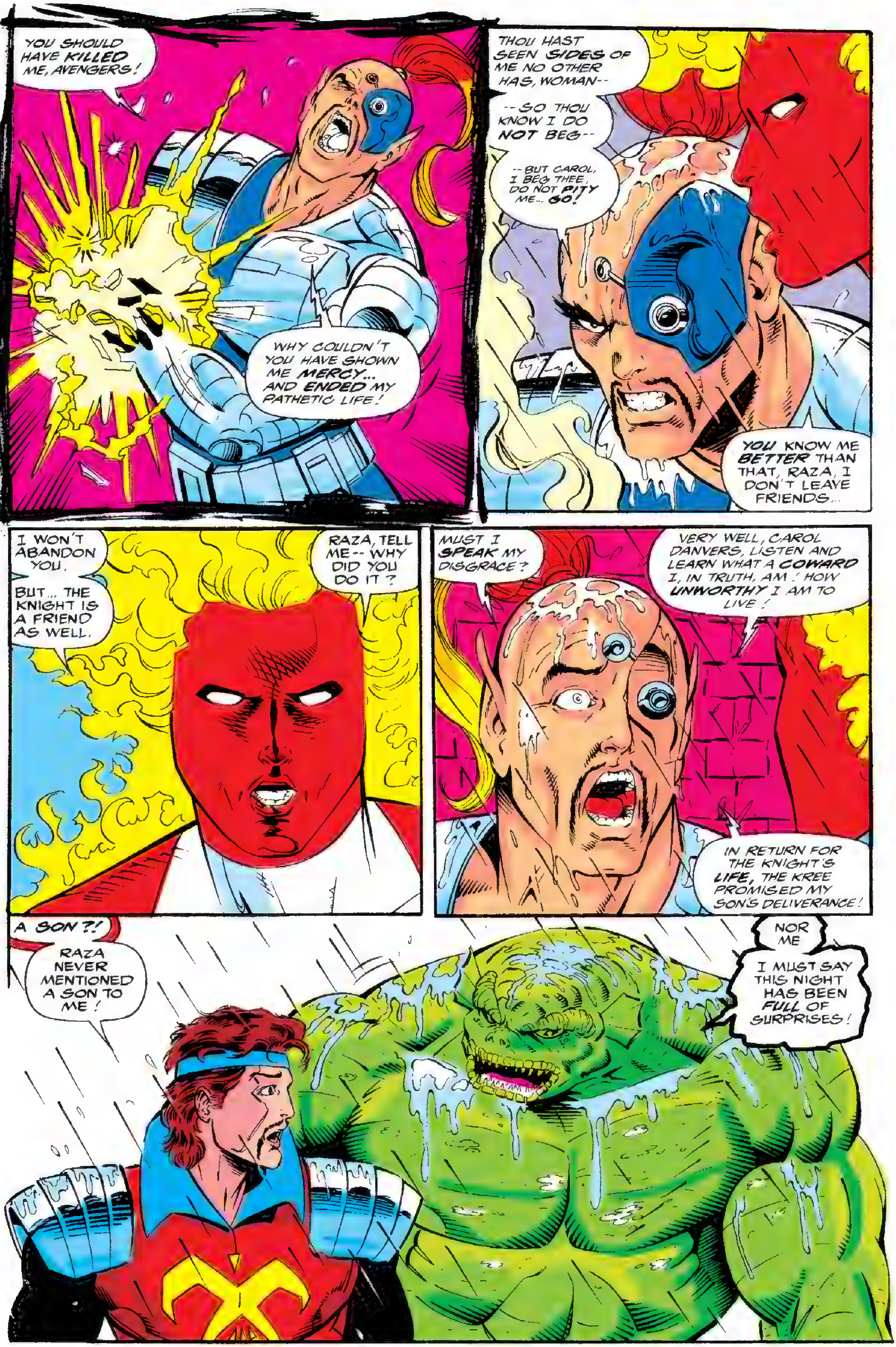

THAT MAY NOT BE WISE, BINARY.
OH, LORD

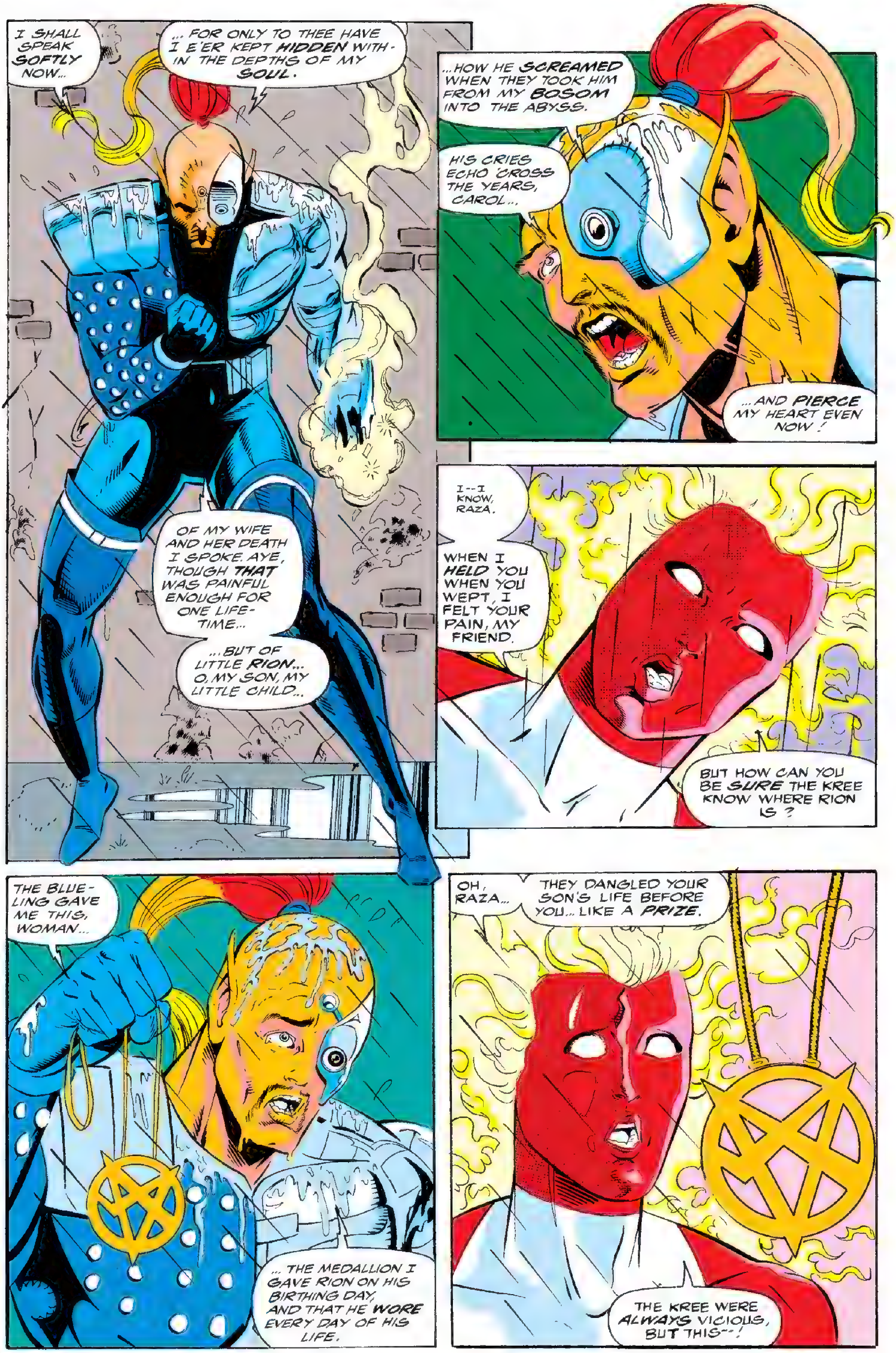

RAZA, IT'S ME, CAROL.
DON'T PULL THE *SILENT* ACT ON ME, PAL.
WE COULD *ALWAYS* TALK TO EACH OTHER...
...REMEMBER? WHEN EVERYONE ELSE ON THE 'JAMMER WAS ASLEEP, WE--

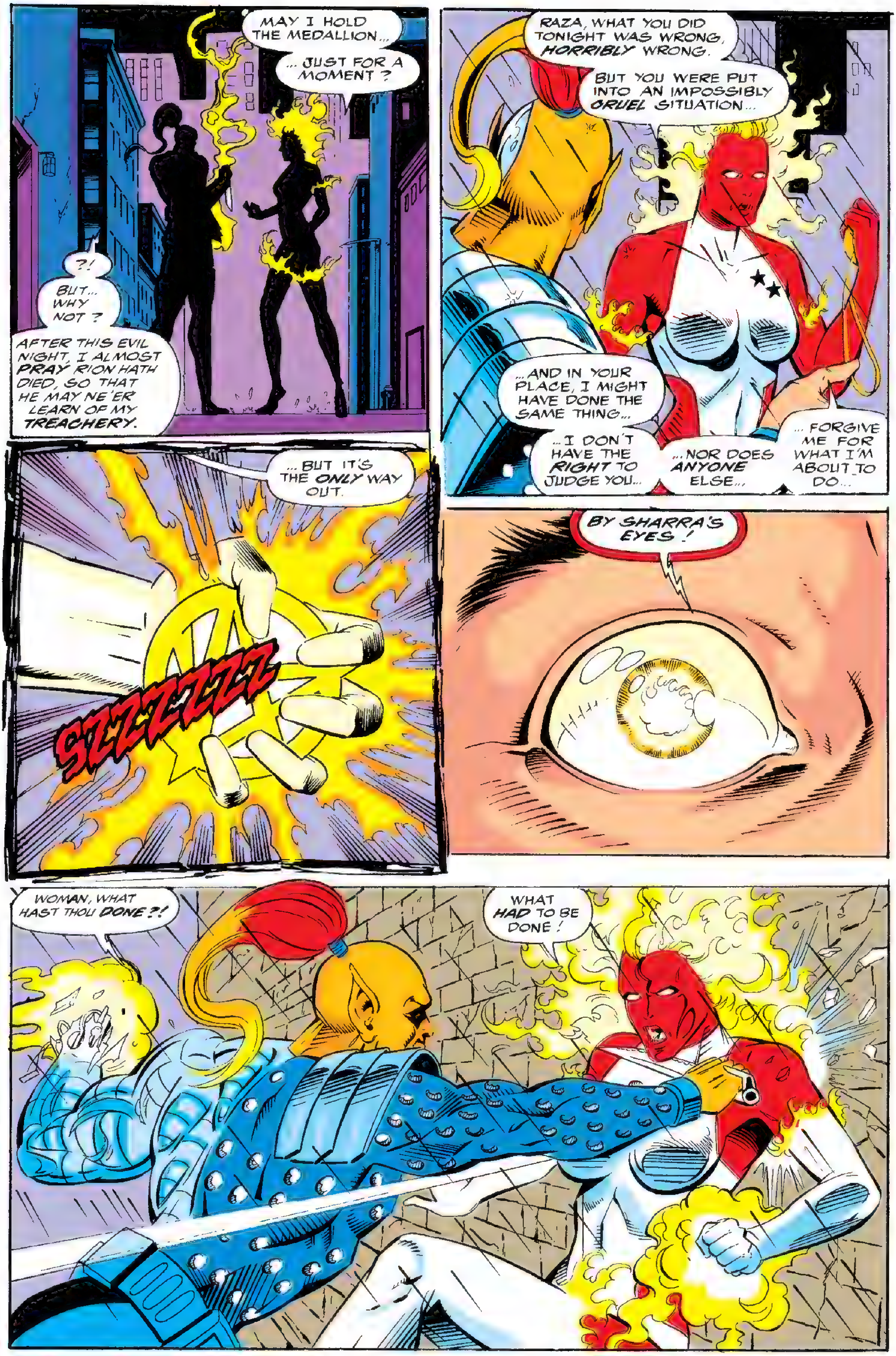

DO *NOT* SEEK TO *HELP* ME, CAROL DANVERS!
I BE NOT *WORTH* THY TROUBLE!

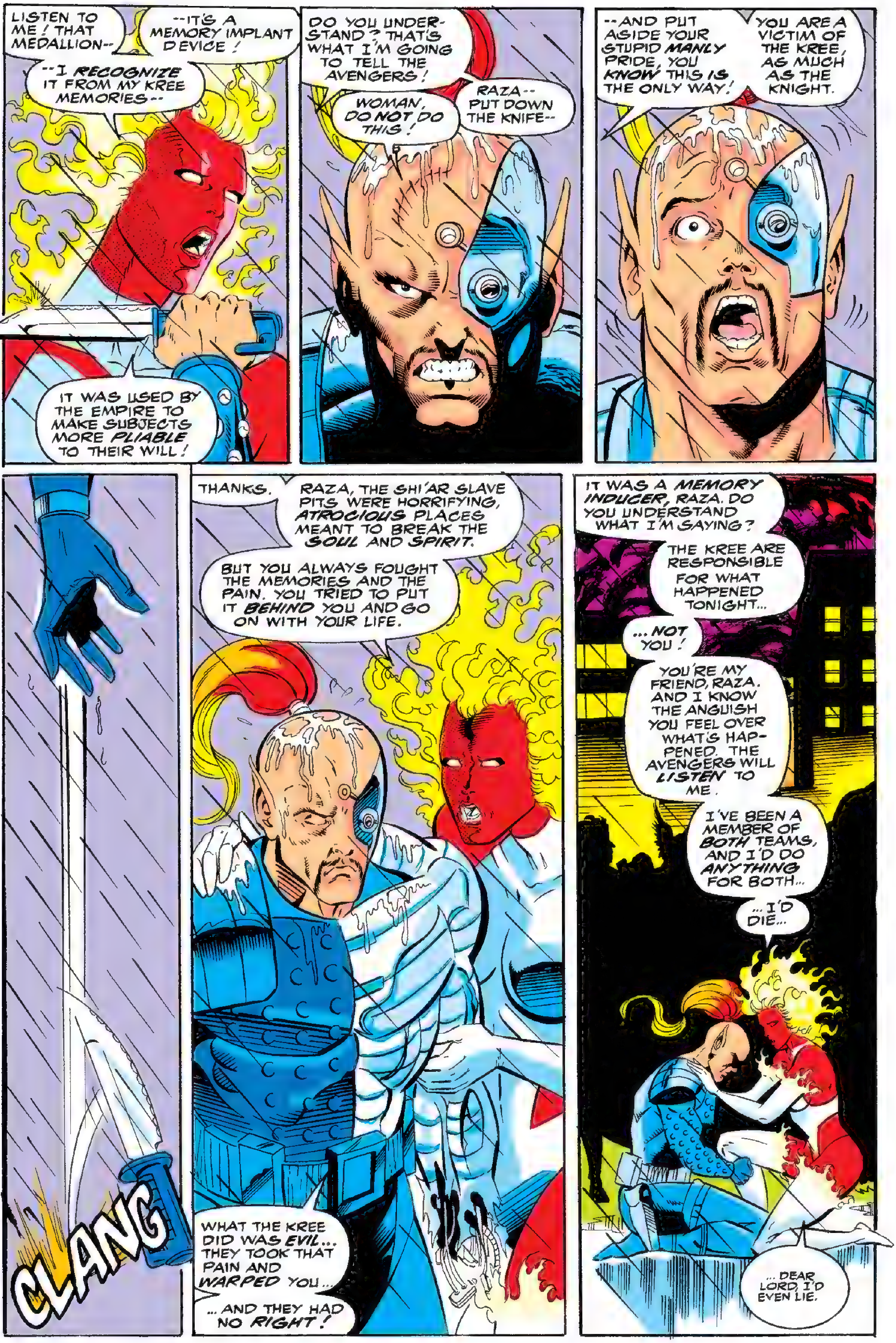

AVENGERS MANSION.
THE PATIENT'S SIGNS ARE MOST ERRATIC...
...THIS STASIS TABLE SHOULD *STABILIZE* THINGS A BIT...
...BUT IF WE'RE TO *SAVE* THIS MAN, WE MUST OPERATE *NOW.*
SIKORSKY AGREES.
WALDO HAS TRANSPORTED ALL SIKORSKY'S MEDICAL EQUIPMENT FROM STARJAMMER SHIP.
THE PROCEDURE CAN PROCEED.
EXCUSE ME... EH... DOCTOR...
...BUT ARE YOU QUITE SURE YOU CAN *HANDLE* THIS?
SIKORSKY IS *INSULTED.* HIS PEOPLE HAVE MADE AN *ART* OF MEDICAL SCIENCE, IN-HUMAN.
WISH YOU TO DEBATE AND LET PATIENT *DIE...*
...OR LET ME GET TO WORK?
OUTSIDE...
BLACK WIDOW...
...PREPARED YOU MUST BE FOR KNIGHT'S *DEATH.*
...FOR SECOND TO *NONE* IS RAZA'S KILLING STROKE.
WHY, THANK YOU, HEPZIBAH...
...YOUR *CONCERN* TOUCHES ME.
I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT DANE WHITMAN IS A FIGHTER, MY FRIEND...
...I WOULDN'T *COUNT* HIM OUT JUST YET.
NOT BY A *LONG* SHOT.
BY THE WAY, I DON'T MEAN TO BE *RUDE,* BUT AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE OUR "HOSTAGE"?
WHY DON'T YOU START *ACTING* LIKE ONE, AND *STAY* IN YOUR ROOM?
WE'LL KEEP YOU *POSTED.*

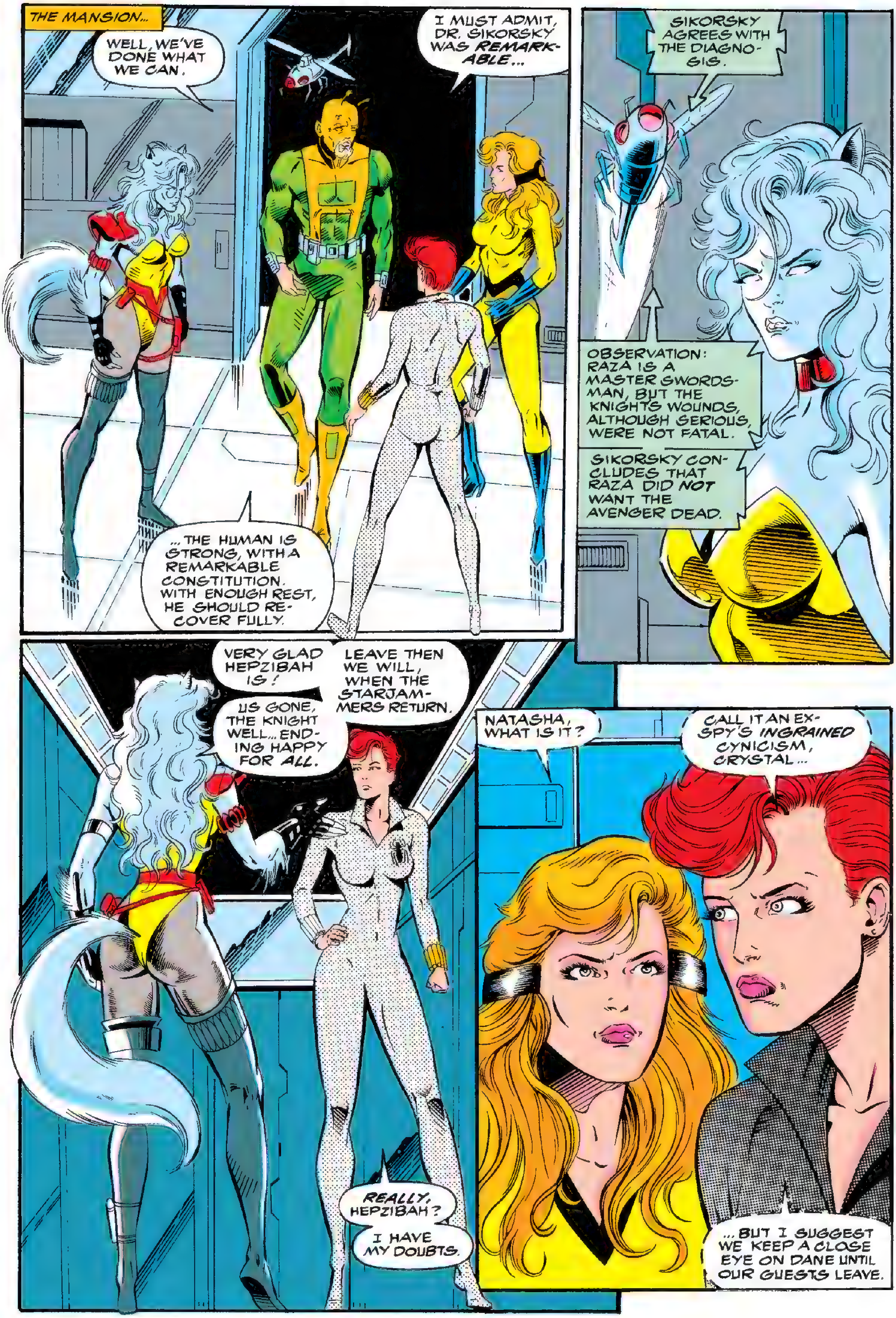

DOWNTOWN...
I *DON'T* LIKE THIS, GUYS.
HOW DO WE KNOW RAZA WON'T ATTACK BINARY?
HE *WON'T*! IF ANYBODY CAN REACH HIM, IT'S CAROL.
WHILE SHE WAS WITH US, SHE AND RAZA FORMED A TYPE OF BOND... A *TRUST* HE'D NEVER EVEN SHOWN *US* BEFORE...
YOU DON'T *KNOW* US, AVENGERS.
BUT WE STAR-JAMMERS HAVE BEEN THROUGH *HADES* AND BACK TOGETHER.
RAZA IS ALIEN... IN *MORE* THAN THE *OBVIOUS* SENSE. BUT HE'S ALSO MY FRIEND.
AND THE BLACK KNIGHT IS *OURS*, CORSAIR.
I'M *SURE* YOU'VE ALL HAD IT *TOUGH*... BUT HOW DOES THAT EXCUSE ATTEMPTED MURDER?
TO HUMANS LIKE YOU AND ME, IT *DOESN'T*, THOR.
BUT RAZA LIVES BY A DIFFERENT CODE. HE *MUST* HAVE HAD A *REASON*.
EMOTIONS HAVE BEEN RUNNING VERY HIGH TONIGHT, CORSAIR.
PERHAPS WE AVENGERS COULD HAVE PREVENTED EVENTS FROM ESCALATING.
VISION?!
I INCLUDE MYSELF IN THAT OBSERVATION, HERCULES.
FOR WHEN I SAW THE KNIGHT LYING THERE, I... FELT... SOMETHING IN ME I CAN ONLY CLASSIFY AS RAGE.
OR GRIEF.
WHEN I ATTACKED CORSAIR, I ONLY ADDED TO A CHAOTIC SITUATION.
BE AT PEACE, VISION.
MAYHAP FROM THIS TRAGIC NIGHT, SOMETHING *WONDROUS* HATH BEEN BORN!

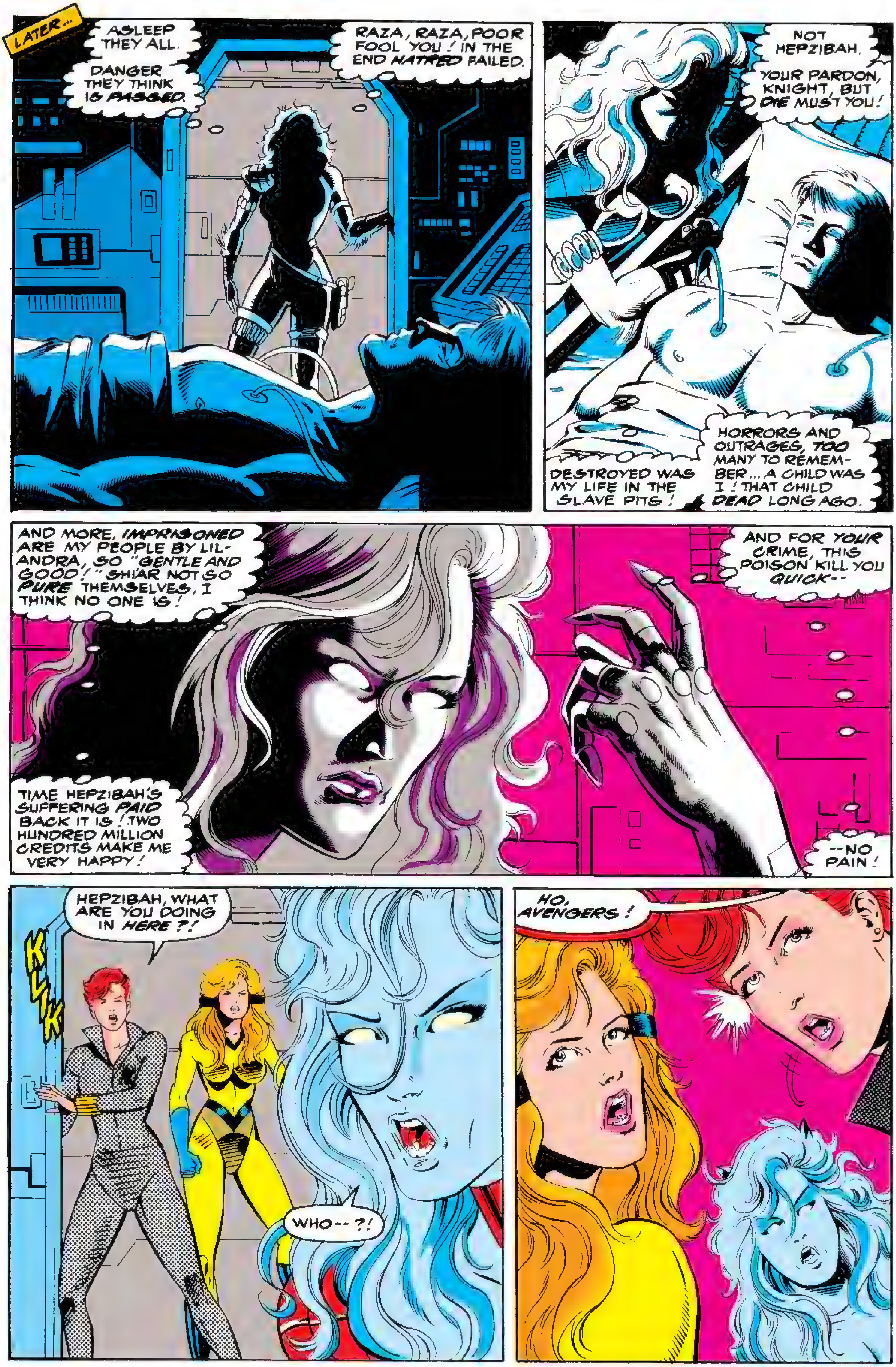

YOU SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME, AVENGERS!
WHY COULDN'T YOU HAVE SHOWN ME MERCY... AND ENDED MY PATHETIC LIFE!
THOU HAST SEEN SIDES OF ME NO OTHER HAS, WOMAN--
--SO THOU KNOW I DO NOT BEG--
--BUT CAROL, I BEG THEE, DO NOT PITY ME... GO!
YOU KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT, RAZA. I DON'T LEAVE FRIENDS...
I WON'T ABANDON YOU.
BUT... THE KNIGHT IS A FRIEND AS WELL.
RAZA, TELL ME -- WHY DID YOU DO IT?
MUST I SPEAK MY DISGRACE?
VERY WELL, CAROL DANVERS, LISTEN AND LEARN WHAT A COWARD I, IN TRUTH, AM! HOW UNWORTHY I AM TO LIVE!
IN RETURN FOR THE KNIGHT'S LIFE, THE KREE PROMISED MY SON'S DELIVERANCE!
A SON?!
RAZA NEVER MENTIONED A SON TO ME!
NOR ME
I MUST SAY THIS NIGHT HAS BEEN FULL OF SURPRISES!

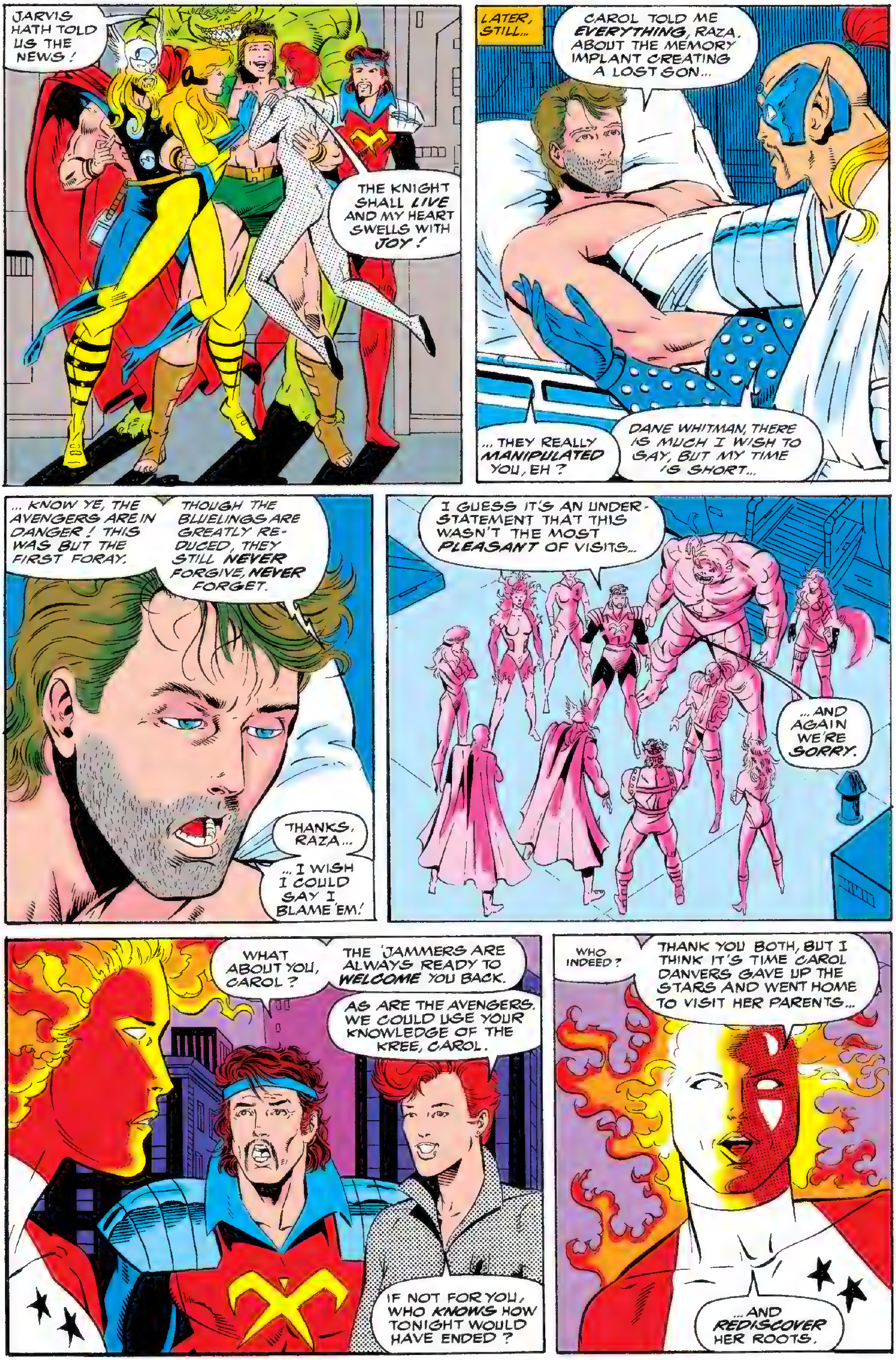

I SHALL SPEAK SOFTLY NOW...
... FOR ONLY TO THEE HAVE I E'ER KEPT HIDDEN WITHIN THE DEPTHS OF MY SOUL.
OF MY WIFE AND HER DEATH I SPOKE. AYE, THOUGH THAT WAS PAINFUL ENOUGH FOR ONE LIFETIME...
...BUT OF LITTLE RION... O, MY SON, MY LITTLE CHILD...
...HOW HE SCREAMED WHEN THEY TOOK HIM FROM MY BOSOM INTO THE ABYSS.
HIS CRIES ECHO 'CROSS THE YEARS, CAROL...
...AND PIERCE MY HEART EVEN NOW!
I--I KNOW, RAZA.
WHEN I HELD YOU WHEN YOU WEPT, I FELT YOUR PAIN, MY FRIEND.
BUT HOW CAN YOU BE SURE THE KREE KNOW WHERE RION IS?
THE BLUELING GAVE ME THIS, WOMAN...
... THE MEDALLION I GAVE RION ON HIS BIRTHING DAY, AND THAT HE WORE EVERY DAY OF HIS LIFE.
OH, RAZA...
THEY DANGLED YOUR SON'S LIFE BEFORE YOU... LIKE A PRIZE.
THE KREE WERE ALWAYS VICIOUS, BUT THIS--!

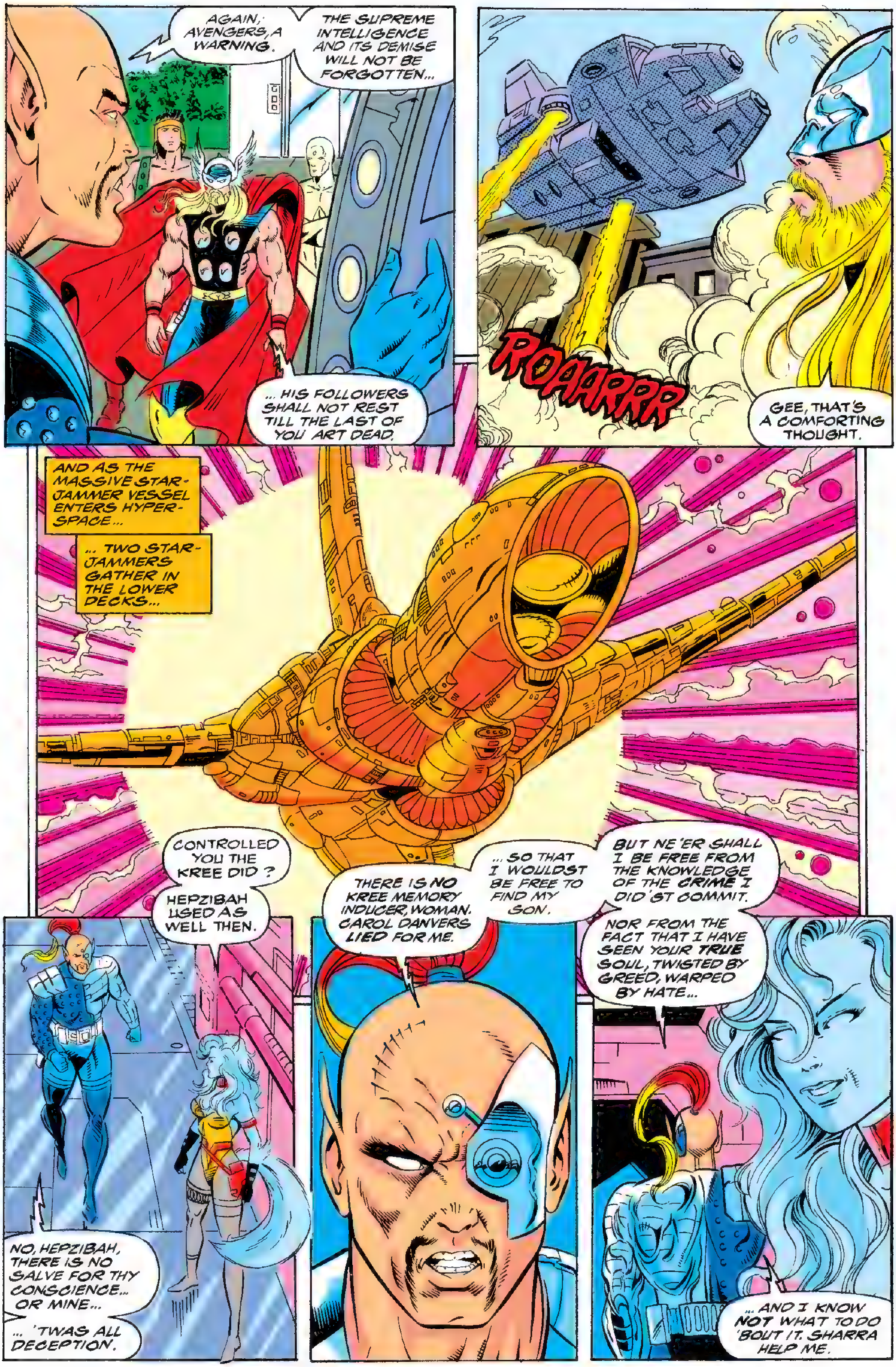

MAY I HOLD THE MEDALLION...
... JUST FOR A MOMENT ?
?!
BUT... WHY NOT ?
AFTER THIS EVIL NIGHT, I ALMOST PRAY RION HATH DIED, SO THAT HE MAY NE'ER LEARN OF MY TREACHERY.
RAZA, WHAT YOU DID TONIGHT WAS WRONG, HORRIBLY WRONG.
BUT YOU WERE PUT INTO AN IMPOSSIBLY CRUEL SITUATION...
...AND IN YOUR PLACE, I MIGHT HAVE DONE THE SAME THING...
...I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO JUDGE YOU...
...NOR DOES ANYONE ELSE...
...FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO...
... BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY OUT.
SZZZZZZ
BY SHARRA'S EYES !
WOMAN, WHAT HAST THOU DONE ?!
WHAT HAD TO BE DONE !

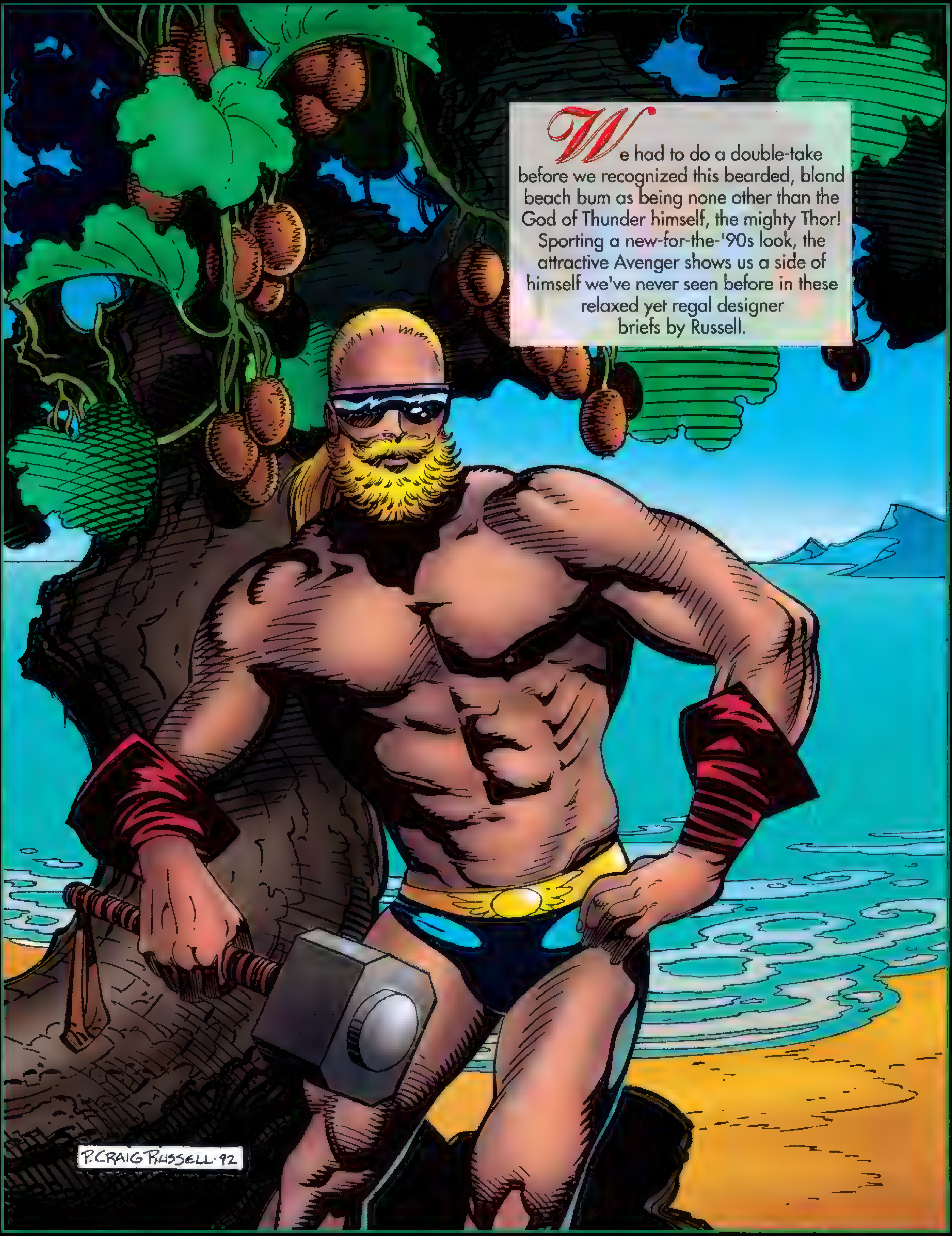

LISTEN TO ME! THAT MEDALLION--
--IT'S A MEMORY IMPLANT DEVICE!
--I RECOGNIZE IT FROM MY KREE MEMORIES--
IT WAS USED BY THE EMPIRE TO MAKE SUBJECTS MORE PLIABLE TO THEIR WILL!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL THE AVENGERS!
WOMAN, DO NOT DO THIS!
RAZA-- PUT DOWN THE KNIFE--
--AND PUT ASIDE YOUR STUPID MANLY PRIDE, YOU KNOW THIS IS THE ONLY WAY!
YOU ARE A VICTIM OF THE KREE, AS MUCH AS THE KNIGHT.
CLANG
THANKS.
RAZA, THE SHI'AR SLAVE PITS WERE HORRIFYING, ATROCIOUS PLACES MEANT TO BREAK THE SOUL AND SPIRIT.
BUT YOU ALWAYS FOUGHT THE MEMORIES AND THE PAIN. YOU TRIED TO PUT IT BEHIND YOU AND GO ON WITH YOUR LIFE.
WHAT THE KREE DID WAS EVIL... THEY TOOK THAT PAIN AND WARPED YOU...
...AND THEY HAD NO RIGHT!
IT WAS A MEMORY INDUCER, RAZA. DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING?
THE KREE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT...
...NOT YOU!
YOU'RE MY FRIEND, RAZA. AND I KNOW THE ANGUISH YOU FEEL OVER WHAT'S HAPPENED. THE AVENGERS WILL LISTEN TO ME.
I'VE BEEN A MEMBER OF BOTH TEAMS, AND I'D DO ANYTHING FOR BOTH...
...I'D DIE...
...DEAR LORD, I'D EVEN LIE.


THE MANSION...
WELL, WE'VE DONE WHAT WE CAN.
I MUST ADMIT, DR. SIKORSKY WAS *REMARKABLE*...
...THE HUMAN IS STRONG, WITH A REMARKABLE CONSTITUTION. WITH ENOUGH REST, HE SHOULD RECOVER FULLY.
SIKORSKY AGREES WITH THE DIAGNOSIS.
OBSERVATION: RAZA IS A MASTER SWORDSMAN, BUT THE KNIGHT'S WOUNDS, ALTHOUGH SERIOUS, WERE NOT FATAL.
SIKORSKY CONCLUDES THAT RAZA DID *NOT* WANT THE AVENGER DEAD.
VERY GLAD HEPZIBAH IS!
LEAVE THEN WE WILL, WHEN THE STARJAMMERS RETURN.
US GONE, THE KNIGHT WELL... ENDING HAPPY FOR *ALL*.
REALLY, HEPZIBAH?
I HAVE MY DOUBTS.
NATASHA, WHAT IS IT?
CALL IT AN EX-SPY'S *INGRAINED* CYNICISM, CRYSTAL...
...BUT I SUGGEST WE KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON DANE UNTIL OUR GUESTS LEAVE.


LATER...
ASLEEP THEY ALL.
DANGER THEY THINK IS PASSED.
RAZA, RAZA, POOR FOOL YOU! IN THE END HATRED FAILED.
NOT HEPZIBAH.
YOUR PARDON, KNIGHT, BUT DIE MUST YOU!
HORRORS AND OUTRAGES, TOO MANY TO REMEMBER... A CHILD WAS I! THAT CHILD DEAD LONG AGO.
DESTROYED WAS MY LIFE IN THE SLAVE PITS!
AND MORE, IMPRISONED ARE MY PEOPLE BY LILANDRA, SO "GENTLE AND GOOD!" SHI'AR NOT SO PURE THEMSELVES, I THINK NO ONE IS!
TIME HEPZIBAH'S SUFFERING PAID BACK IT IS! TWO HUNDRED MILLION CREDITS MAKE ME VERY HAPPY!
AND FOR YOUR CRIME, THIS POISON KILL YOU QUICK--
--NO PAIN!
HEPZIBAH, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?!
KLIK
WHO--?!
HO, AVENGERS!


JARVIS HATH TOLD US THE NEWS!
THE KNIGHT SHALL LIVE AND MY HEART SWELLS WITH JOY!
LATER, STILL...
CAROL TOLD ME EVERYTHING, RAZA, ABOUT THE MEMORY IMPLANT CREATING A LOST SON...
...THEY REALLY MANIPULATED YOU, EH?
DANE WHITMAN, THERE IS MUCH I WISH TO SAY, BUT MY TIME IS SHORT...
...KNOW YE, THE AVENGERS ARE IN DANGER! THIS WAS BUT THE FIRST FORAY.
THOUGH THE BLUELINGS ARE GREATLY REDUCED, THEY STILL NEVER FORGIVE, NEVER FORGET.
THANKS, RAZA...
...I WISH I COULD SAY I BLAME 'EM!
I GUESS IT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT THAT THIS WASN'T THE MOST PLEASANT OF VISITS...
...AND AGAIN WE'RE SORRY.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, CAROL?
THE 'JAMMERS ARE ALWAYS READY TO WELCOME YOU BACK.
AS ARE THE AVENGERS. WE COULD USE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE KREE, CAROL.
IF NOT FOR YOU, WHO KNOWS HOW TONIGHT WOULD HAVE ENDED?
WHO INDEED?
THANK YOU BOTH, BUT I THINK IT'S TIME CAROL DANVERS GAVE UP THE STARS AND WENT HOME TO VISIT HER PARENTS...
...AND REDISCOVER HER ROOTS.

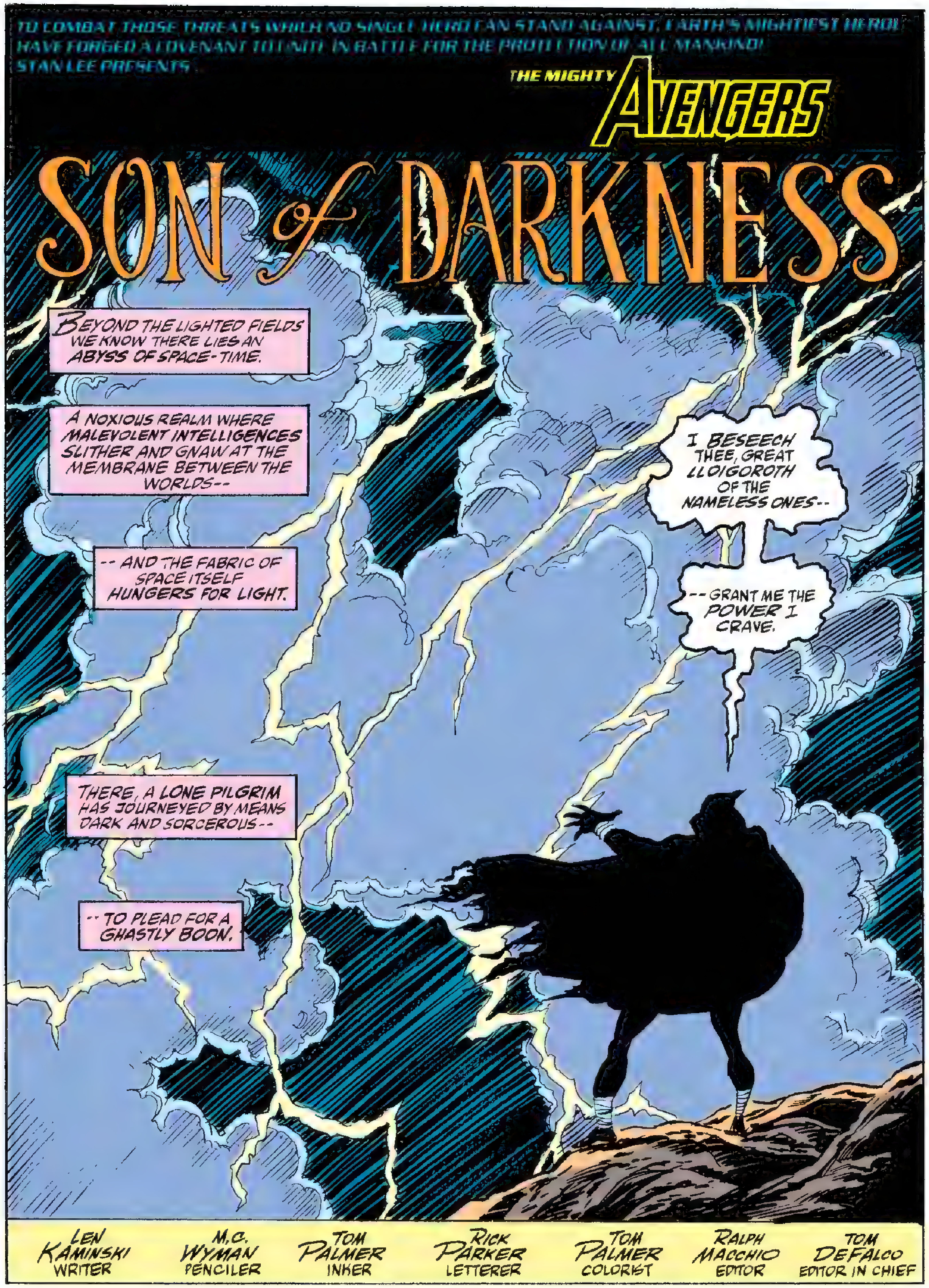

AGAIN, AVENGERS, A WARNING.
THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE AND ITS DEMISE WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN...
...HIS FOLLOWERS SHALL NOT REST TILL THE LAST OF YOU ART DEAD.
ROAARRR
GEE, THAT'S A COMFORTING THOUGHT.
AND AS THE MASSIVE STAR-JAMMER VESSEL ENTERS HYPER-SPACE...
...TWO STAR-JAMMERS GATHER IN THE LOWER DECKS...
CONTROLLED YOU THE KREE DID?
HEPZIBAH USED AS WELL THEN.
NO, HEPZIBAH, THERE IS NO SALVE FOR THY CONSCIENCE... OR MINE...
...'TWAS ALL DECEPTION.
THERE IS NO KREE MEMORY INDUCER, WOMAN. CAROL DANVERS LIED FOR ME.
...SO THAT I WOULDST BE FREE TO FIND MY SON.
BUT NE'ER SHALL I BE FREE FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CRIME I DID'ST COMMIT.
NOR FROM THE FACT THAT I HAVE SEEN YOUR TRUE SOUL, TWISTED BY GREED, WARPED BY HATE...
...AND I KNOW NOT WHAT TO DO 'BOUT IT. SHARRA HELP ME.

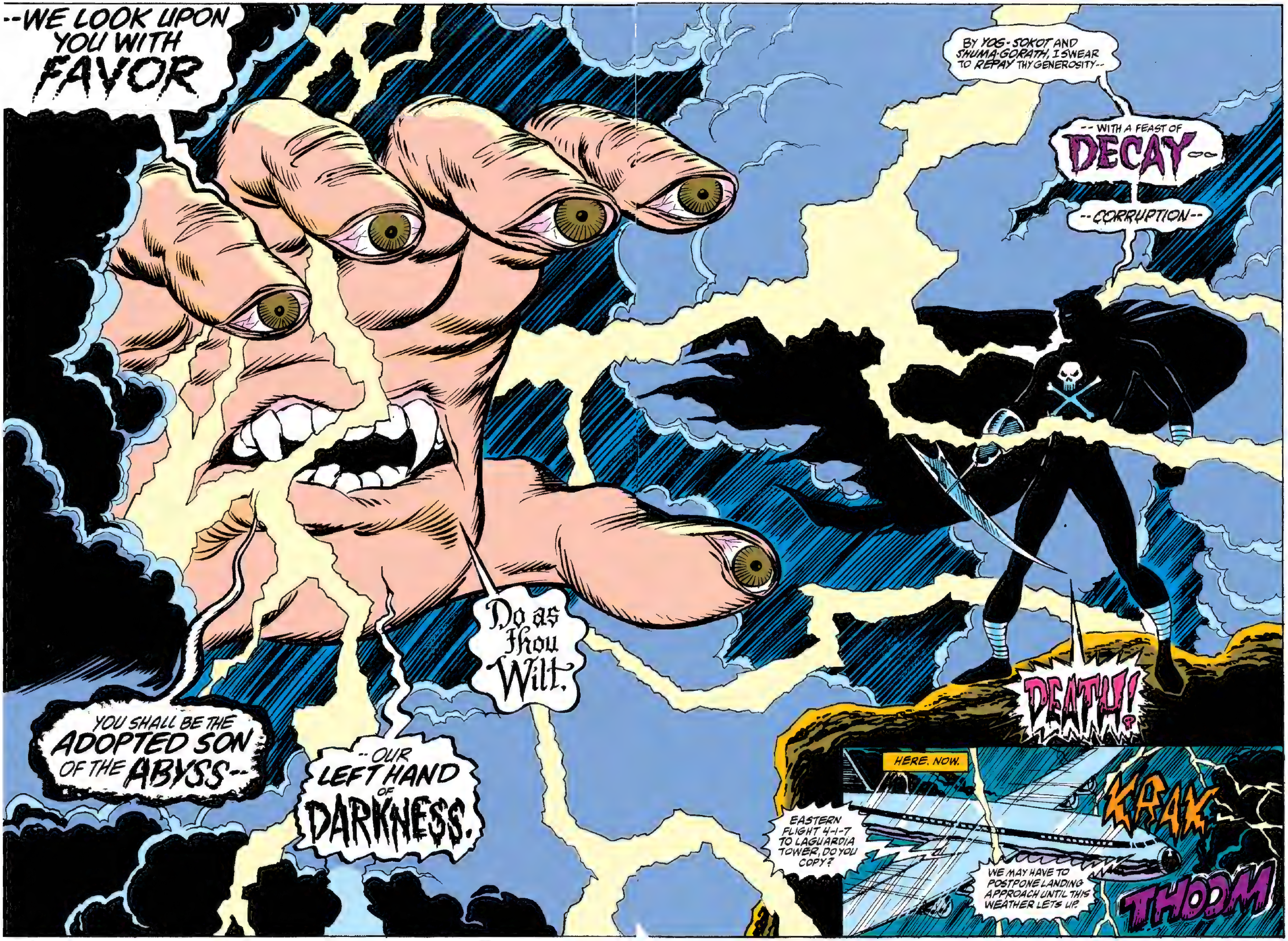


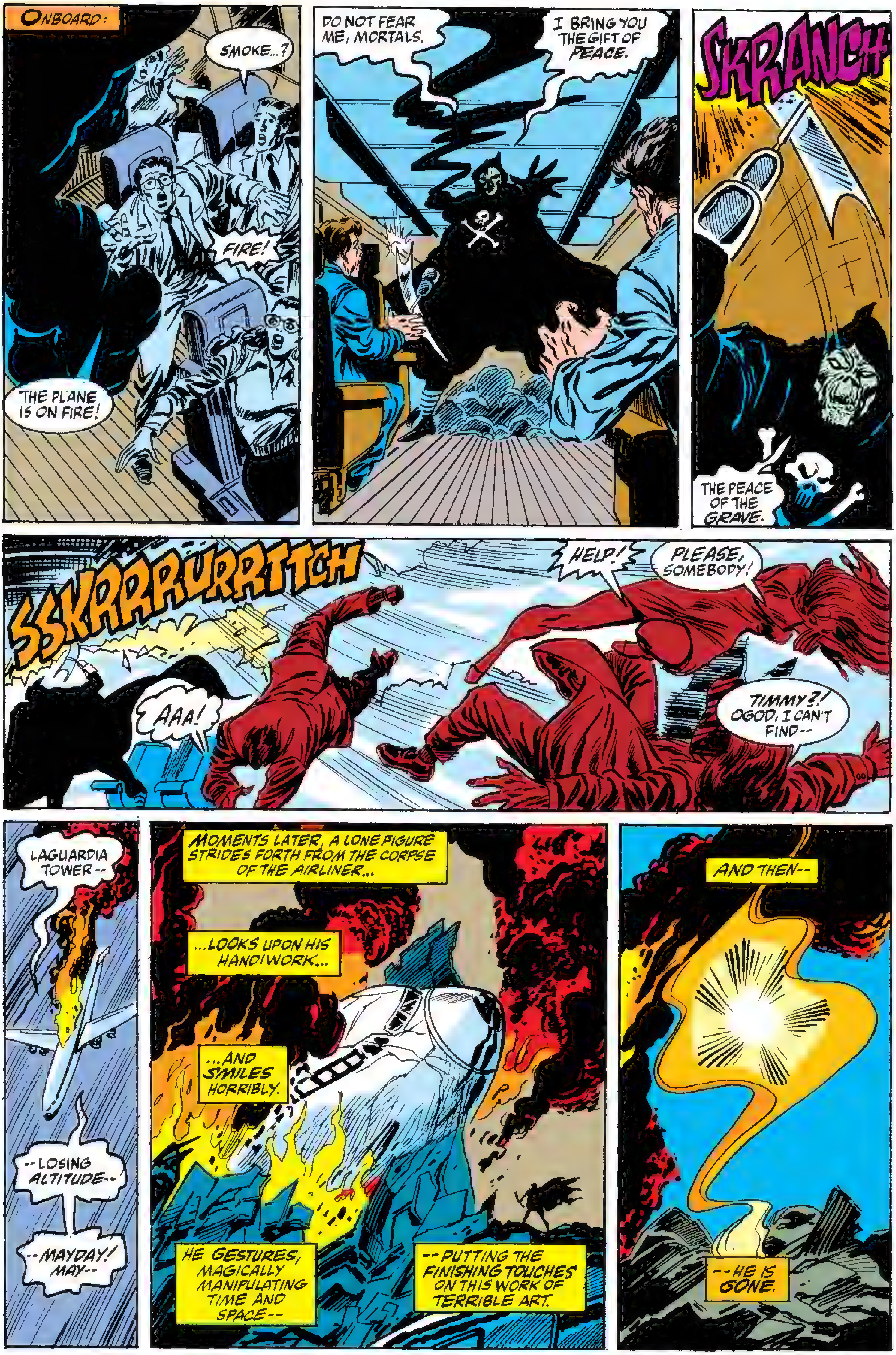
We had to do a double-take before we recognized this bearded, blond beach bum as being none other than the God of Thunder himself, the mighty Thor! Sporting a new-for-the-'90s look, the attractive Avenger shows us a side of himself we've never seen before in these relaxed yet regal designer briefs by Russell.

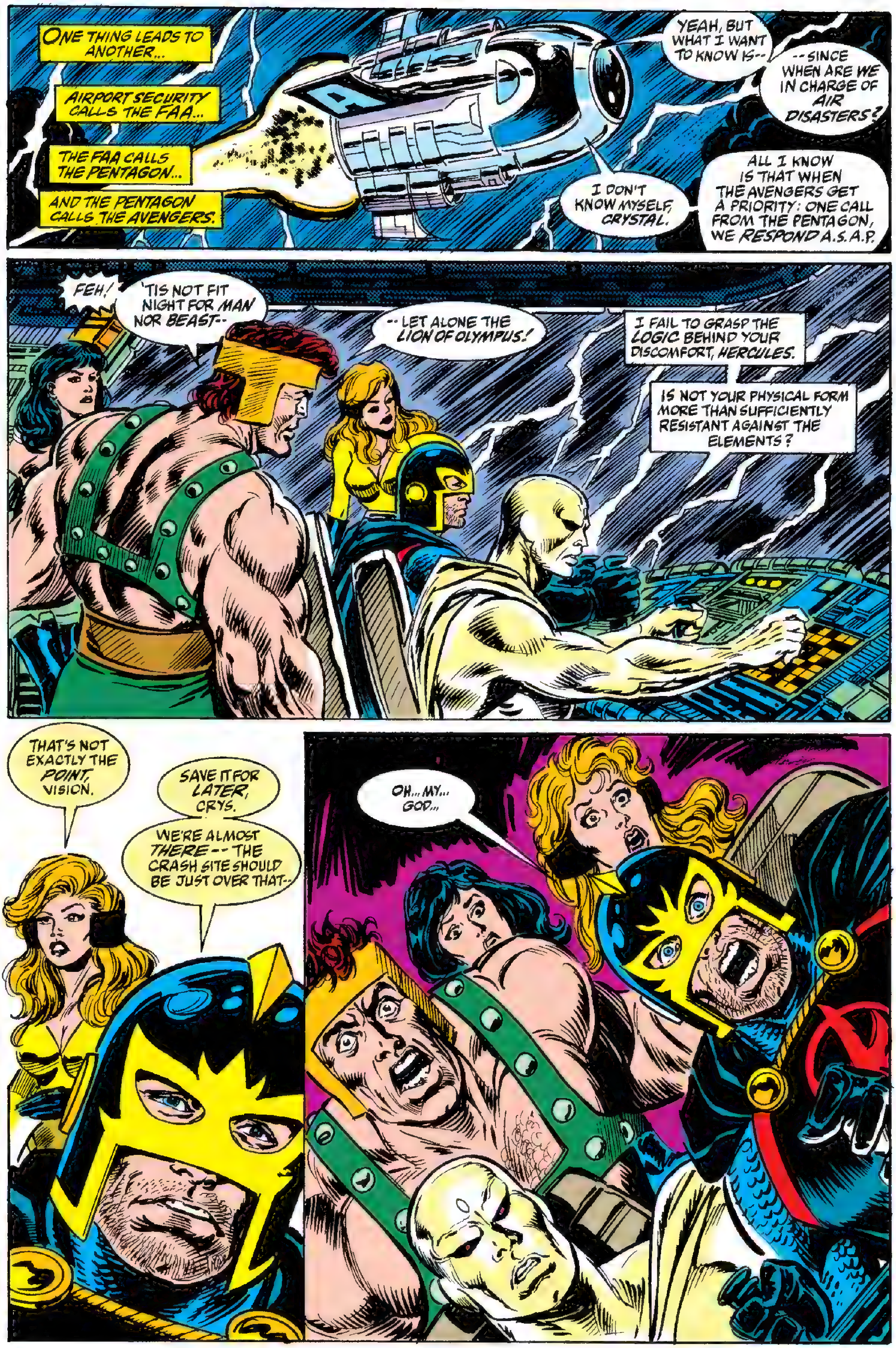
MARVEL SWIMSUIT SPECIAL #1 PINUP BY P. CRAIG RUSSELL & TOM SMITH • TEXT BY MATTHEW MORRA

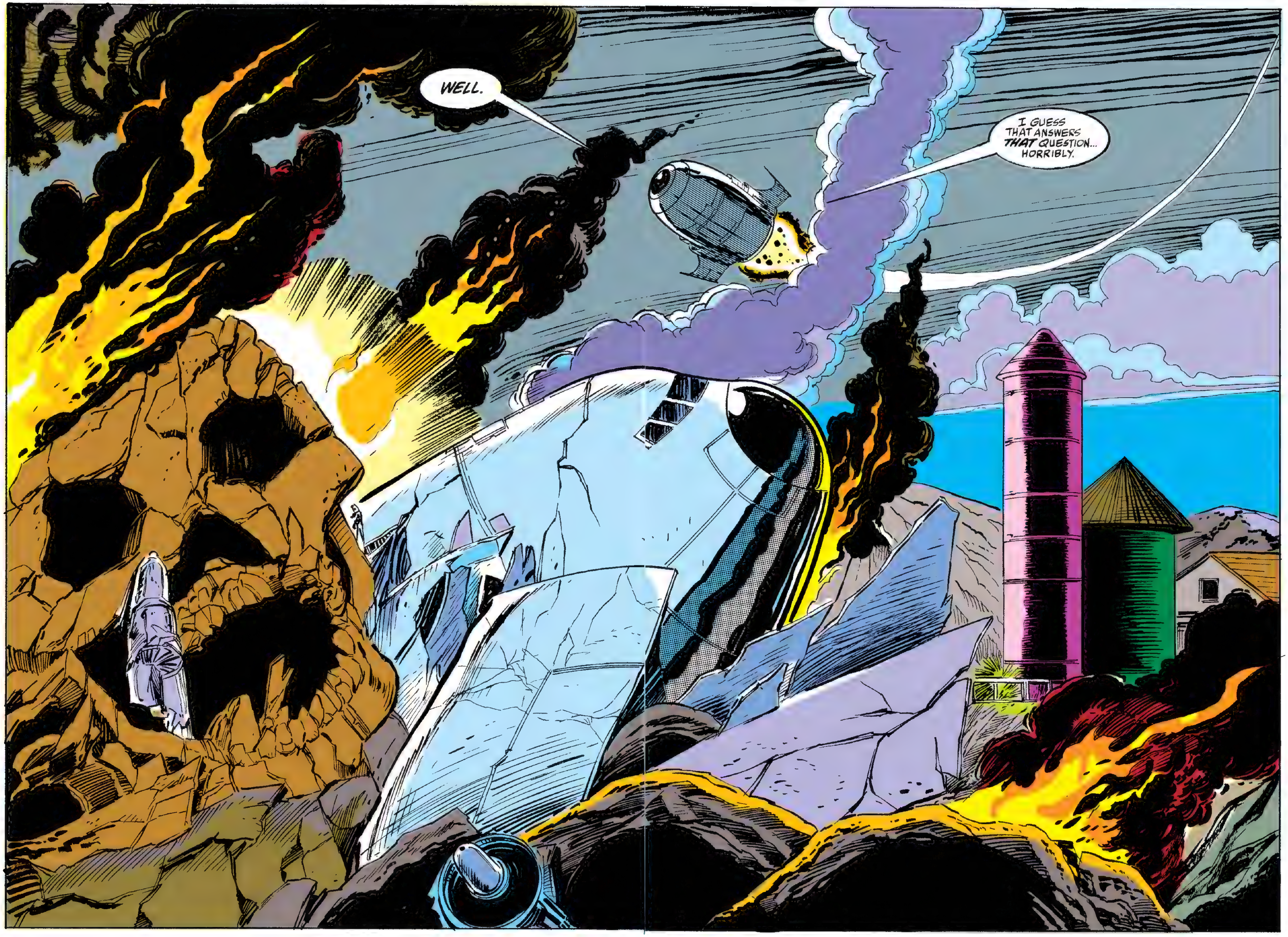
MARVEL COMICS
FEAR THE REAPER PART I of III
AVENGERS
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN / UK 70p
352
EARLY SEP
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
© 1992 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
TM
DIE, AVENGERS DIE!
McWYMAN · PALMER

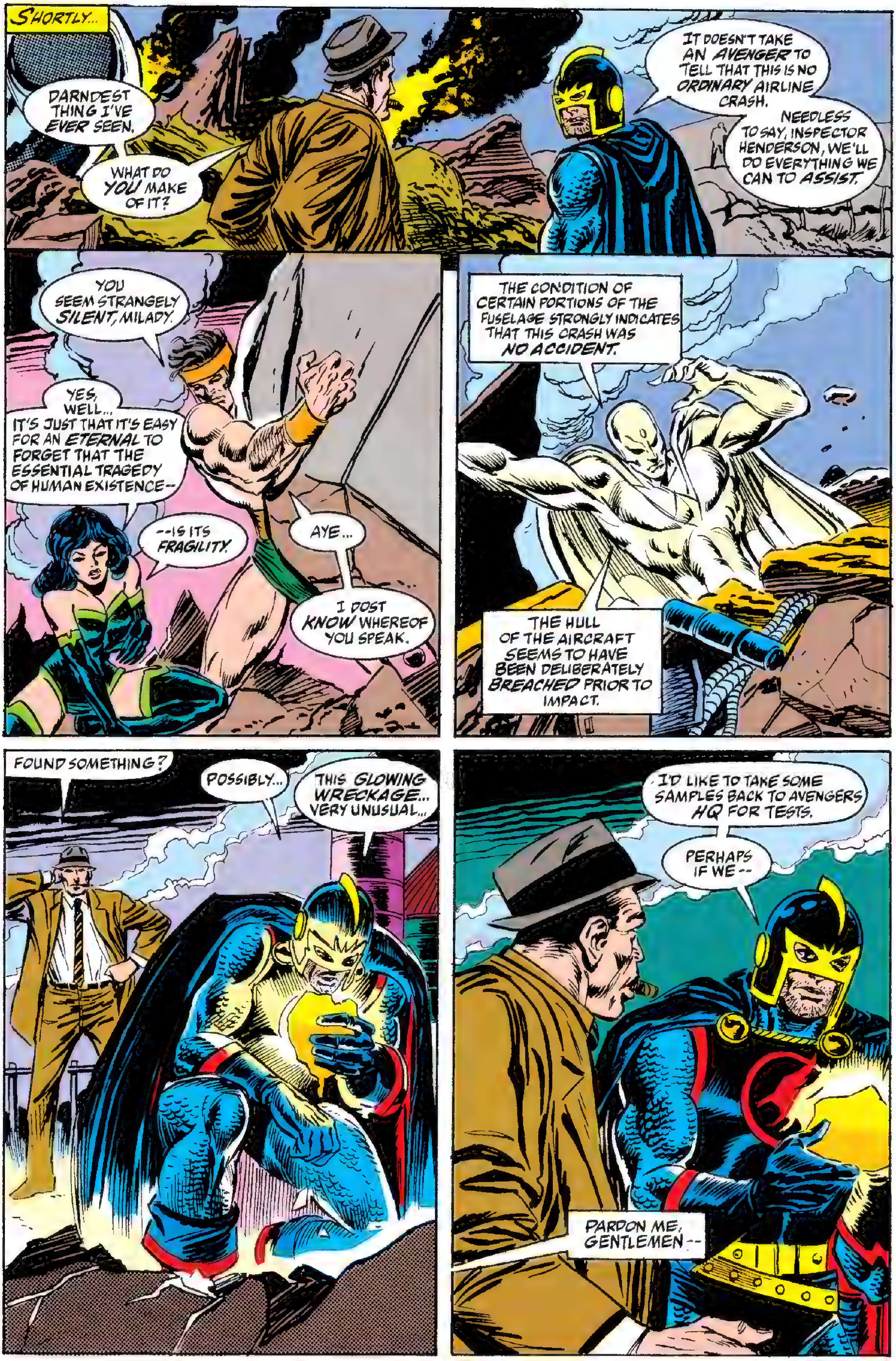

TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROE
HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS...
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS
SON of DARKNESS
BEYOND THE LIGHTED FIELDS WE KNOW THERE LIES AN ABYSS OF SPACE-TIME.
A NOXIOUS REALM WHERE MALEVOLENT INTELLIGENCES SLITHER AND GNAW AT THE MEMBRANE BETWEEN THE WORLDS--
--AND THE FABRIC OF SPACE ITSELF HUNGERS FOR LIGHT.
I BESEECH THEE, GREAT LLOIGOROTH OF THE NAMELESS ONES--
--GRANT ME THE POWER I CRAVE.
THERE, A LONE PILGRIM HAS JOURNEYED BY MEANS DARK AND SORCEROUS--
--TO PLEAD FOR A GHASTLY BOON.
LEN KAMINSKI WRITER
M.C. WYMAN PENCILER
TOM PALMER INKER
RICK PARKER LETTERER
TOM PALMER COLORIST
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

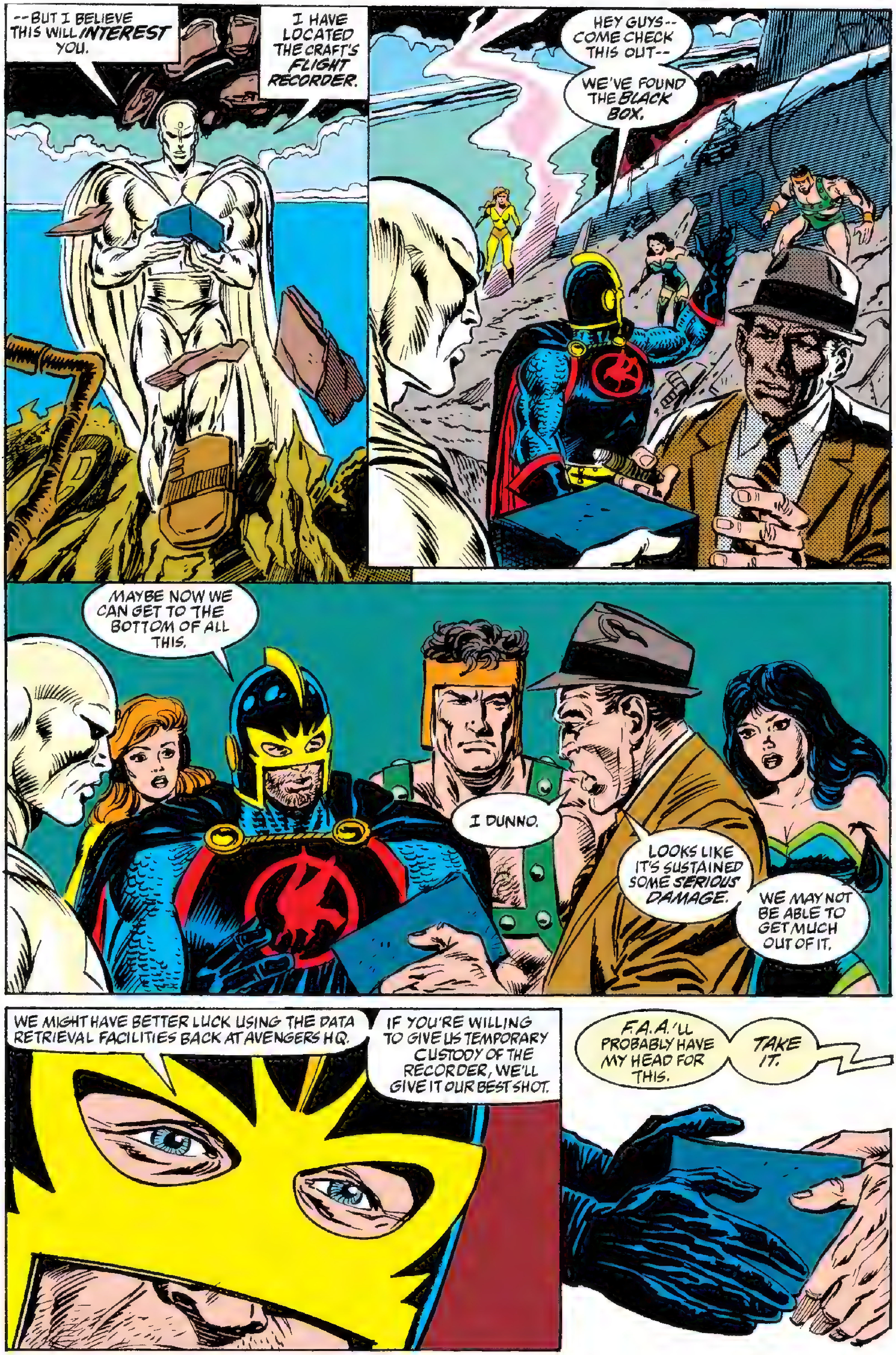

--WE LOOK UPON YOU WITH FAVOR
YOU SHALL BE THE ADOPTED SON OF THE ABYSS--
--OUR LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS.
Do as Thou Wilt.
BY YOG-SOKOT AND SHUMA-GORATH, I SWEAR TO REPAY THY GENEROSITY--
--WITH A FEAST OF DECAY--
--CORRUPTION--
DEATH!
HERE. NOW.
KRAK
EASTERN FLIGHT 4-1-7 TO LAGUARDIA TOWER, DO YOU COPY?
WE MAY HAVE TO POSTPONE LANDING APPROACH UNTIL THIS WEATHER LETS UP.
THOOM

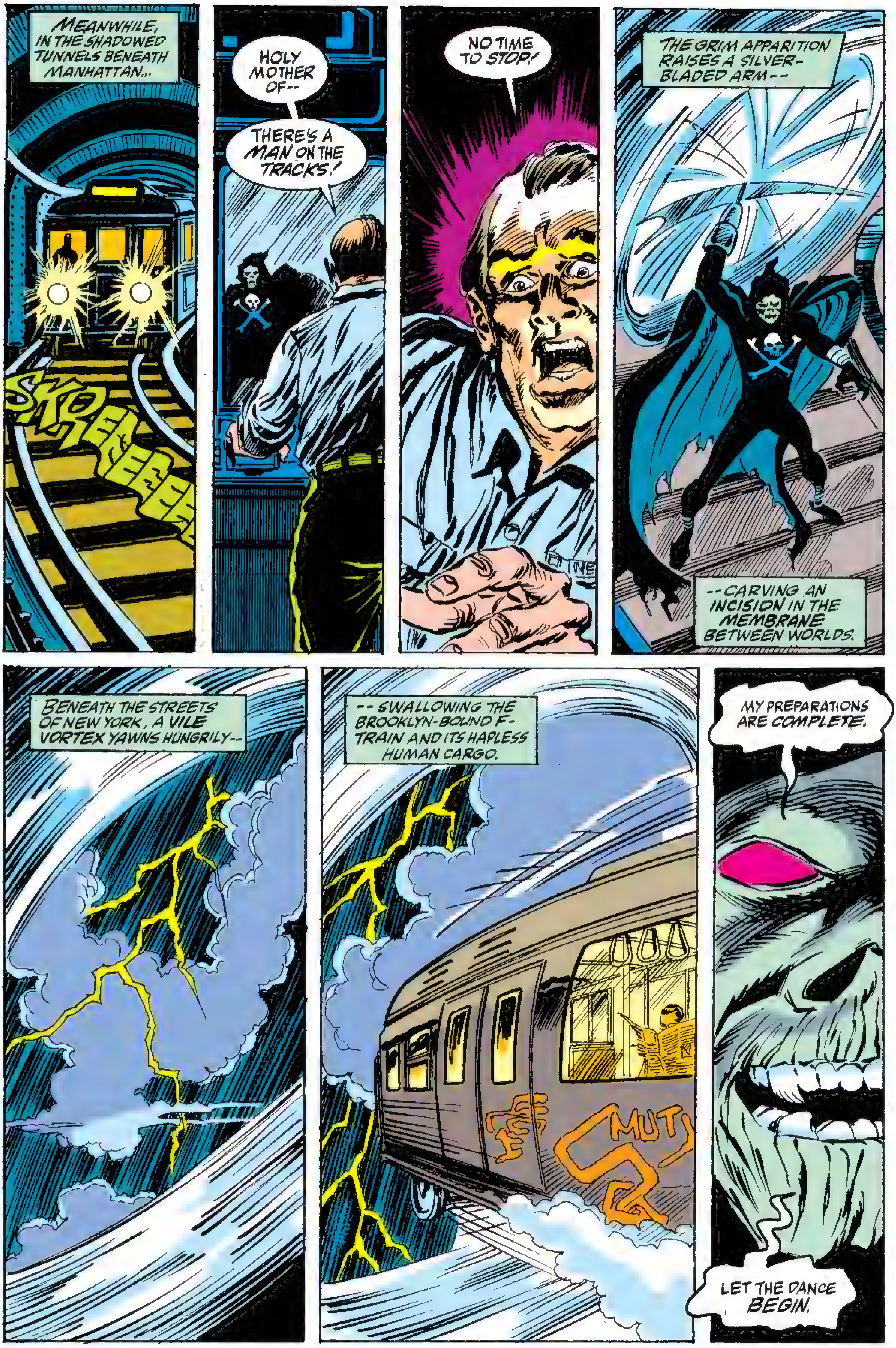

ONBOARD:
SMOKE...?
FIRE!
THE PLANE IS ON FIRE!
DO NOT FEAR ME, MORTALS.
I BRING YOU THE GIFT OF PEACE.
SKRANCH
THE PEACE OF THE GRAVE.
SSKRRRURRTTCH
AAA!
HELP!
PLEASE, SOMEBODY!
TIMMY?! OGOD, I CAN'T FIND--
LAGUARDIA TOWER--
--LOSING ALTITUDE--
--MAYDAY! MAY--
MOMENTS LATER, A LONE FIGURE STRIDES FORTH FROM THE CORPSE OF THE AIRLINER...
...LOOKS UPON HIS HANDIWORK...
...AND SMILES HORRIBLY.
HE GESTURES, MAGICALLY MANIPULATING TIME AND SPACE--
--PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THIS WORK OF TERRIBLE ART.
AND THEN--
--HE IS GONE.

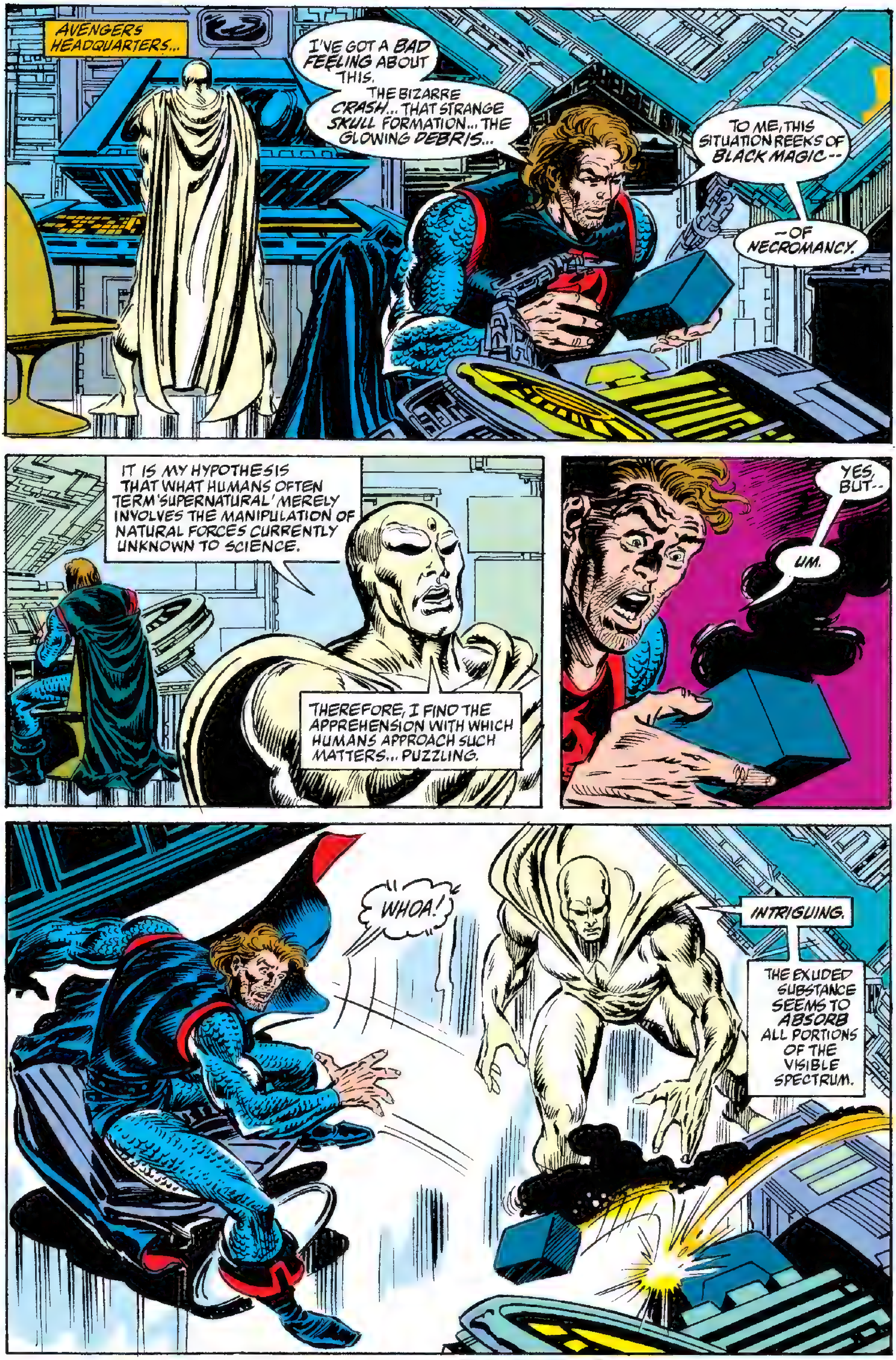

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER...
AIRPORT SECURITY CALLS THE FAA...
THE FAA CALLS THE PENTAGON...
AND THE PENTAGON CALLS THE AVENGERS.
YEAH, BUT WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS--
--SINCE WHEN ARE WE IN CHARGE OF AIR DISASTERS?
I DON'T KNOW MYSELF, CRYSTAL.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT WHEN THE AVENGERS GET A PRIORITY: ONE CALL FROM THE PENTAGON, WE RESPOND A.S.A.P.
FEH!
'TIS NOT FIT NIGHT FOR MAN NOR BEAST--
--LET ALONE THE LION OF OLYMPUS!
I FAIL TO GRASP THE LOGIC BEHIND YOUR DISCOMFORT, HERCULES.
IS NOT YOUR PHYSICAL FORM MORE THAN SUFFICIENTLY RESISTANT AGAINST THE ELEMENTS?
THAT'S NOT EXACTLY THE POINT, VISION.
SAVE IT FOR LATER, CRYS.
WE'RE ALMOST THERE -- THE CRASH SITE SHOULD BE JUST OVER THAT--
OH... MY... GOD...

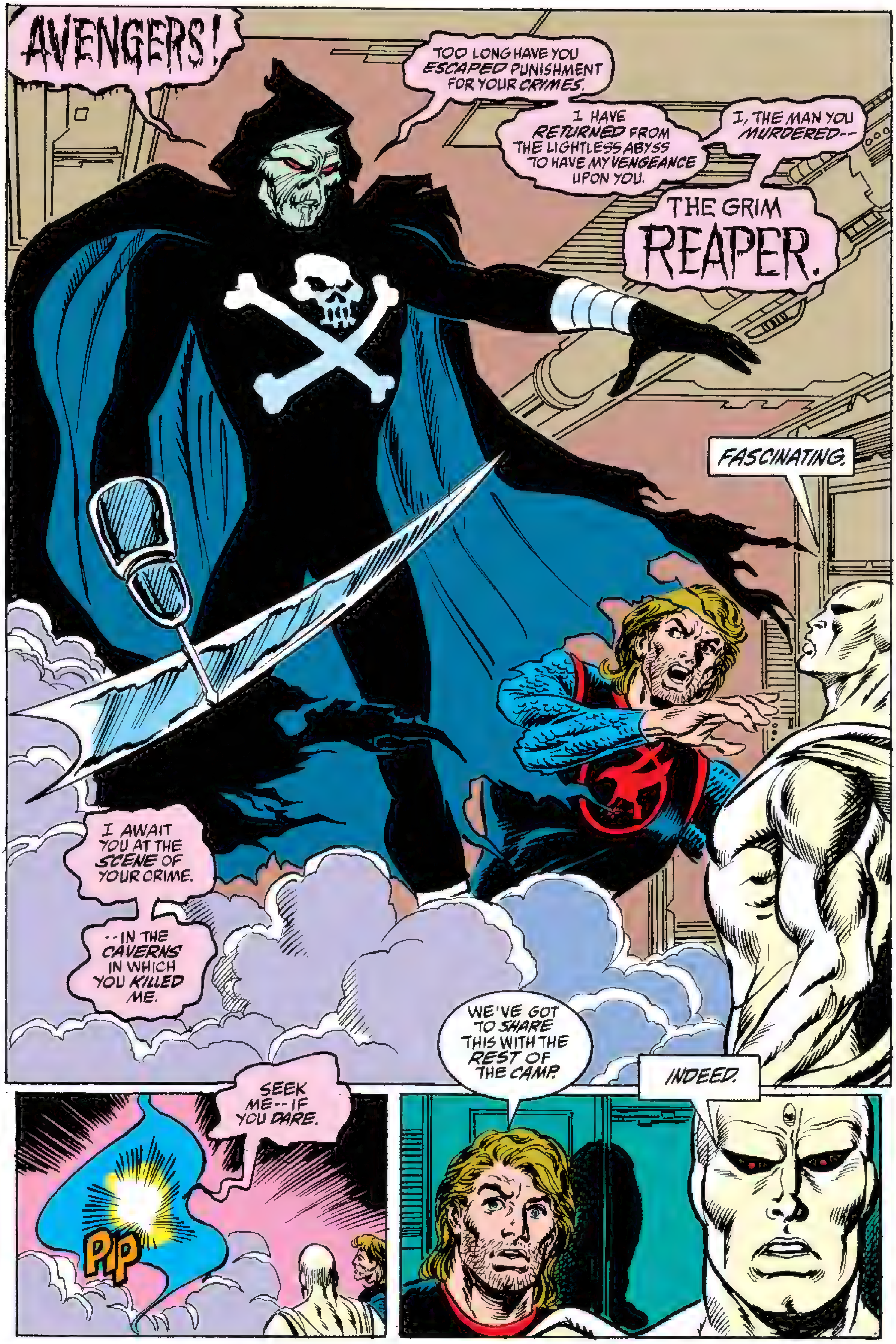

WELL.
I GUESS THAT ANSWERS THAT QUESTION... HORRIBLY.

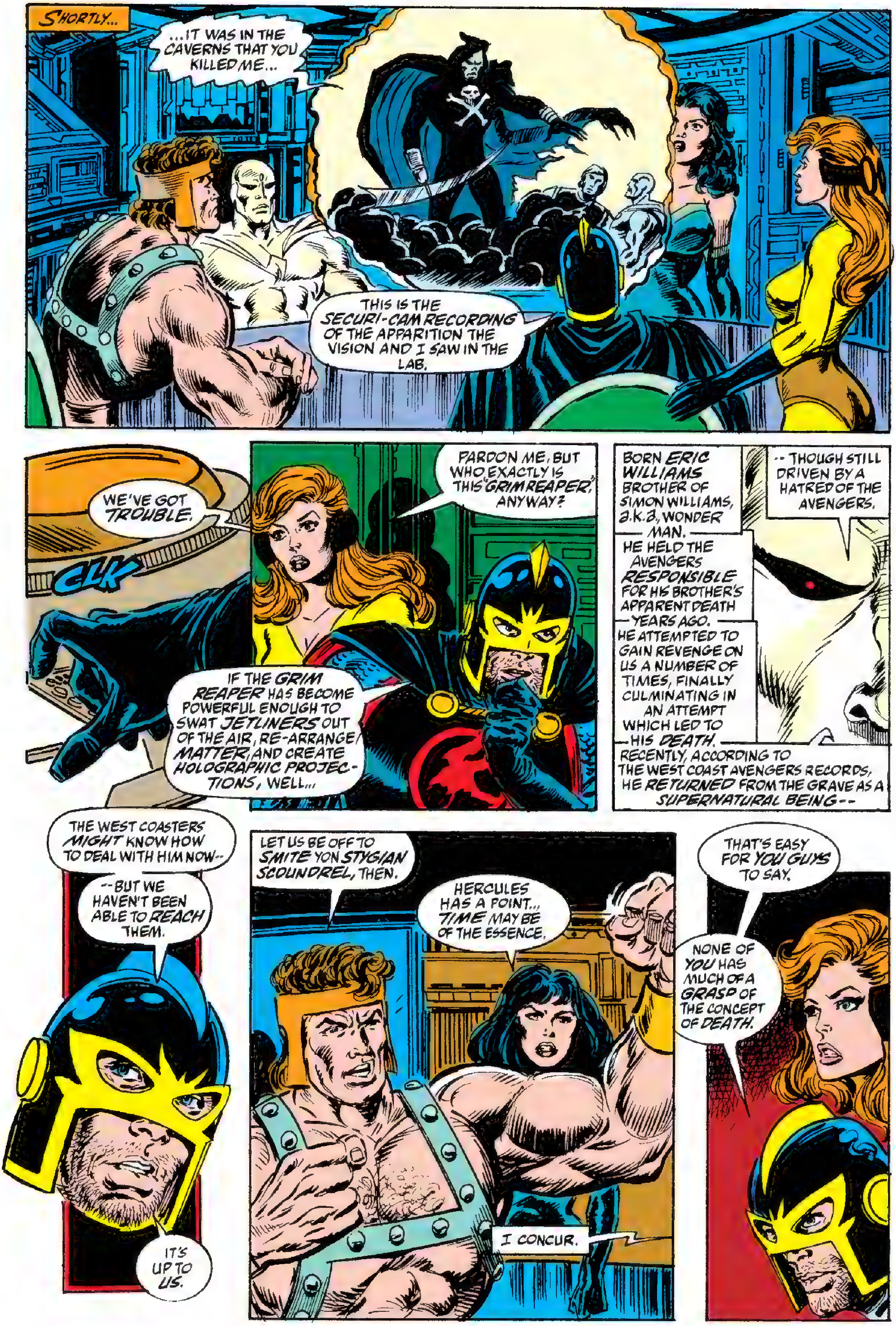

SHORTLY...
DARNDEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN.
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?
IT DOESN'T TAKE AN AVENGER TO TELL THAT THIS IS NO ORDINARY AIRLINE CRASH.
NEEDLESS TO SAY, INSPECTOR HENDERSON, WE'LL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO ASSIST.
YOU SEEM STRANGELY SILENT, MILADY.
YES, WELL... IT'S JUST THAT IT'S EASY FOR AN ETERNAL TO FORGET THAT THE ESSENTIAL TRAGEDY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE--
--IS ITS FRAGILITY.
AYE...
I DOST KNOW WHEREOF YOU SPEAK.
THE CONDITION OF CERTAIN PORTIONS OF THE FUSELAGE STRONGLY INDICATES THAT THIS CRASH WAS NO ACCIDENT.
THE HULL OF THE AIRCRAFT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY BREACHED PRIOR TO IMPACT.
FOUND SOMETHING?
POSSIBLY...
THIS GLOWING WRECKAGE... VERY UNUSUAL...
I'D LIKE TO TAKE SOME SAMPLES BACK TO AVENGERS HQ FOR TESTS.
PERHAPS IF WE--
PARDON ME, GENTLEMEN--

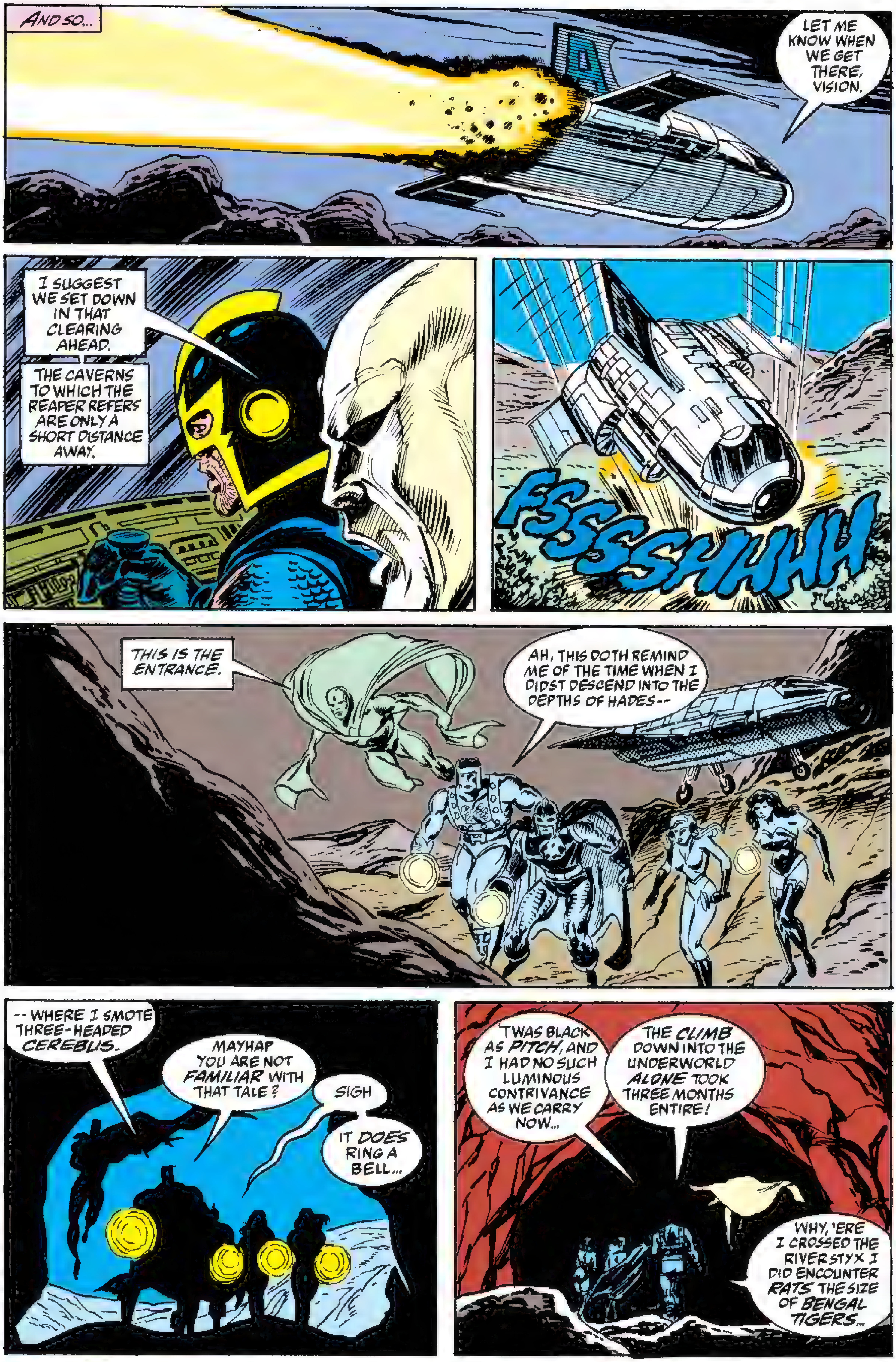

--BUT I BELIEVE THIS WILL INTEREST YOU.
I HAVE LOCATED THE CRAFT'S FLIGHT RECORDER.
HEY GUYS-- COME CHECK THIS OUT--
WE'VE FOUND THE BLACK BOX.
MAYBE NOW WE CAN GET TO THE BOTTOM OF ALL THIS.
I DUNNO.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S SUSTAINED SOME SERIOUS DAMAGE.
WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET MUCH OUT OF IT.
WE MIGHT HAVE BETTER LUCK USING THE DATA RETRIEVAL FACILITIES BACK AT AVENGERS HQ.
IF YOU'RE WILLING TO GIVE US TEMPORARY CUSTODY OF THE RECORDER, WE'LL GIVE IT OUR BEST SHOT.
F.A.A.'LL PROBABLY HAVE MY HEAD FOR THIS.
TAKE IT.

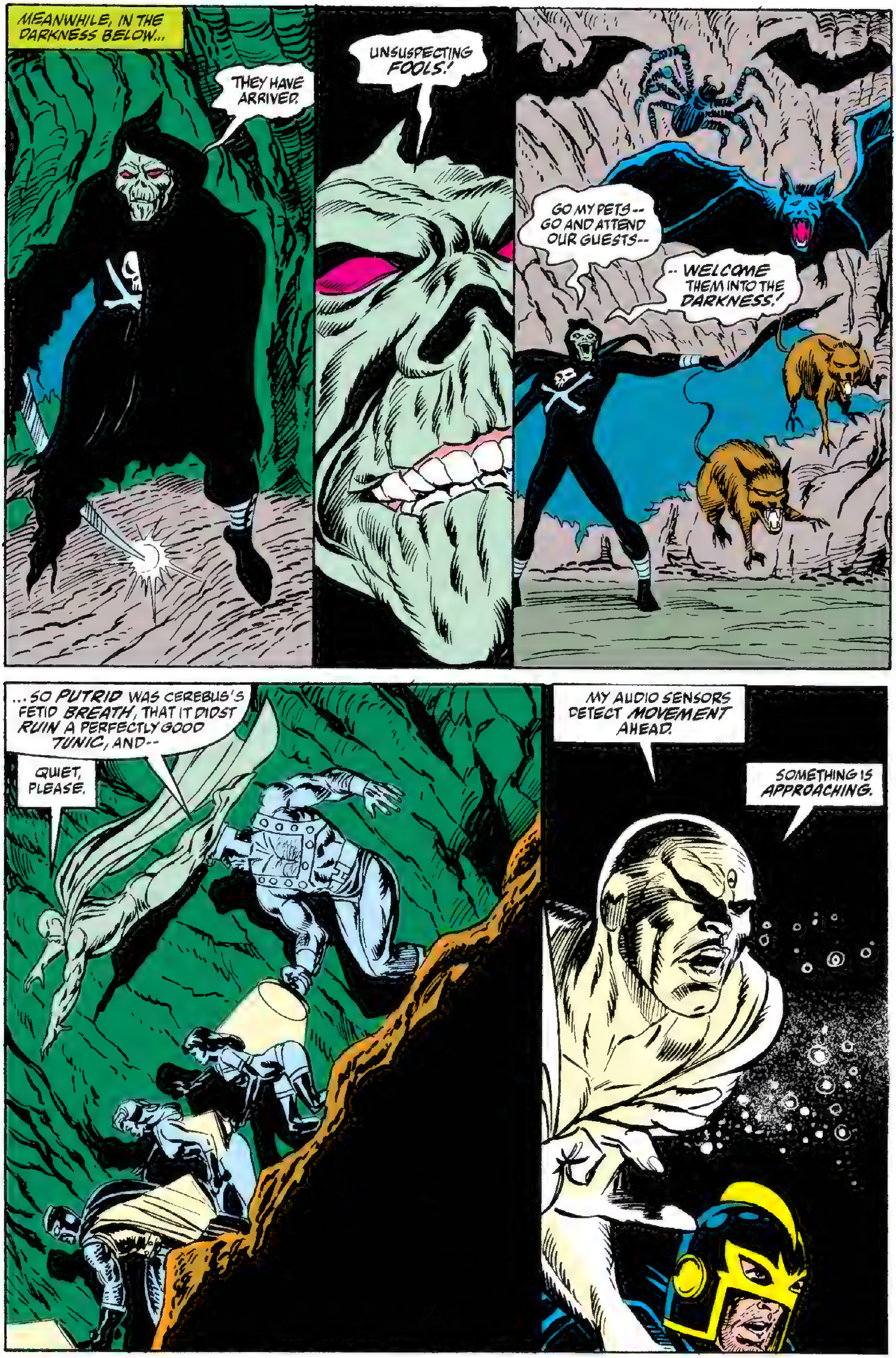

MEANWHILE, IN THE SHADOWED TUNNELS BENEATH MANHATTAN...
SKREEEEEE
HOLY MOTHER OF--
THERE'S A MAN ON THE TRACKS!
NO TIME TO STOP!
THE GRIM APPARITION RAISES A SILVER-BLADED ARM--
--CARVING AN INCISION IN THE MEMBRANE BETWEEN WORLDS.
BENEATH THE STREETS OF NEW YORK, A VILE VORTEX YAWNS HUNGRILY--
--SWALLOWING THE BROOKLYN-BOUND F-TRAIN AND ITS HAPLESS HUMAN CARGO.
MUT
MY PREPARATIONS ARE COMPLETE.
LET THE DANCE BEGIN.

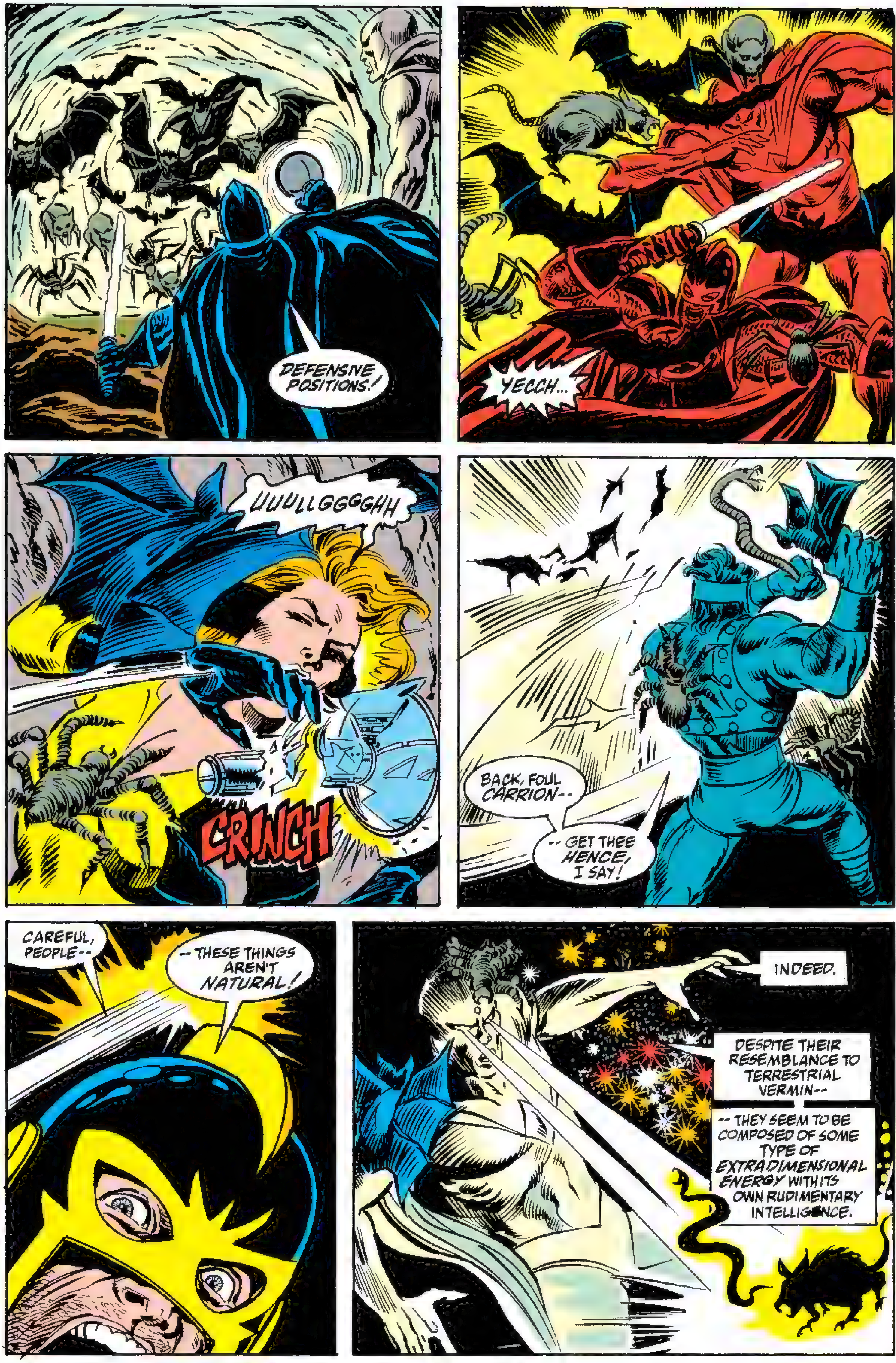

AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.
THE BIZARRE CRASH... THAT STRANGE SKULL FORMATION... THE GLOWING DEBRIS...
TO ME, THIS SITUATION REEKS OF BLACK MAGIC--
--OF NECROMANCY.
IT IS MY HYPOTHESIS THAT WHAT HUMANS OFTEN TERM 'SUPERNATURAL' MERELY INVOLVES THE MANIPULATION OF NATURAL FORCES CURRENTLY UNKNOWN TO SCIENCE.
THEREFORE, I FIND THE APPREHENSION WITH WHICH HUMANS APPROACH SUCH MATTERS... PUZZLING.
YES, BUT--
UM.
WHOA!
INTRIGUING.
THE EXUDED SUBSTANCE SEEMS TO ABSORB ALL PORTIONS OF THE VISIBLE SPECTRUM.

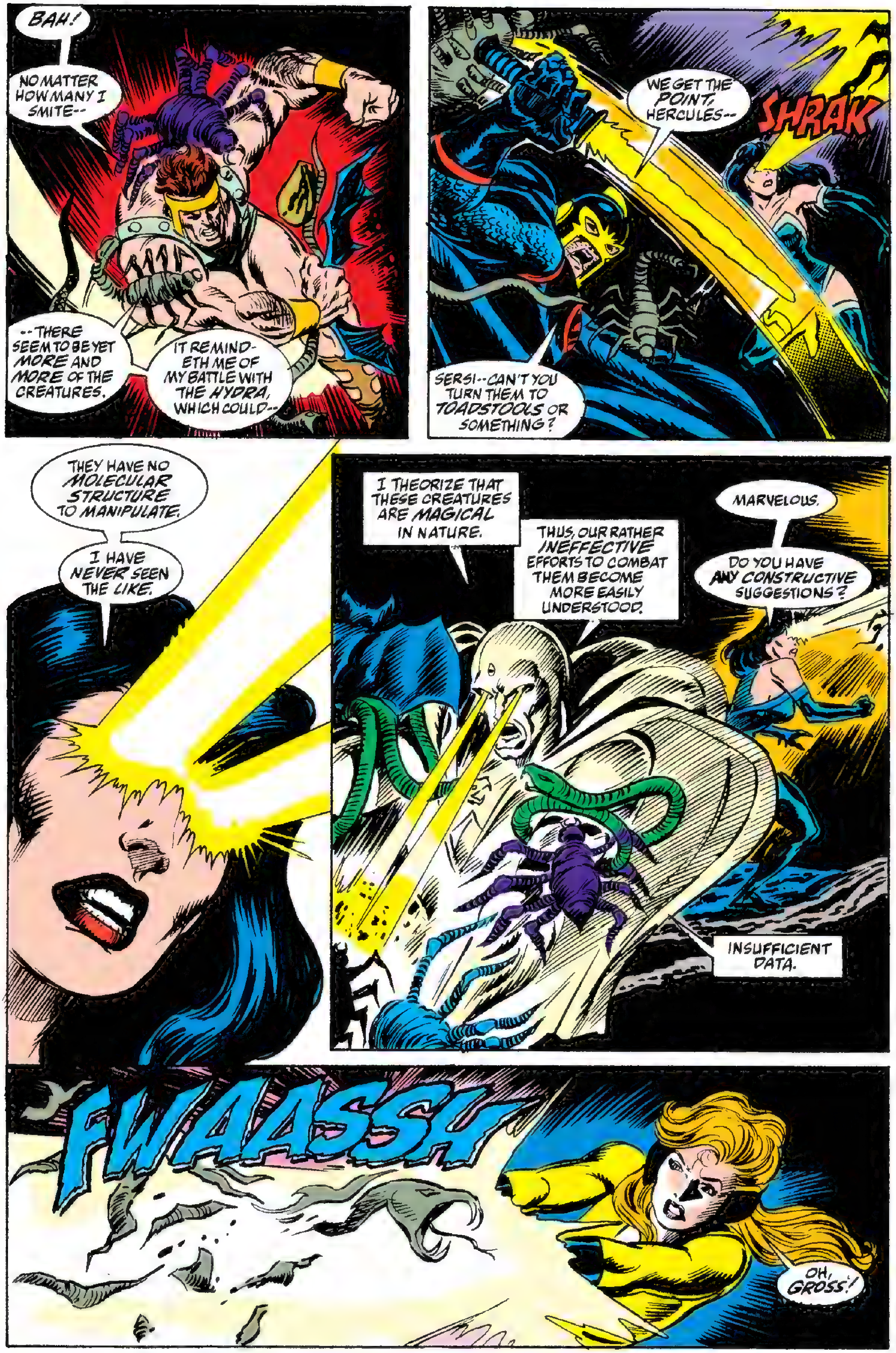

AVENGERS!
TOO LONG HAVE YOU *ESCAPED* PUNISHMENT FOR YOUR *CRIMES*.
I HAVE *RETURNED* FROM THE LIGHTLESS ABYSS TO HAVE MY *VENGEANCE* UPON YOU.
I, THE MAN YOU *MURDERED*--
THE GRIM REAPER.
FASCINATING.
I AWAIT YOU AT THE *SCENE* OF YOUR CRIME.
--IN THE *CAVERNS* IN WHICH YOU *KILLED* ME.
SEEK ME--IF YOU *DARE*.
PIP
WE'VE GOT TO *SHARE* THIS WITH THE *REST* OF THE *CAMP*.
INDEED.

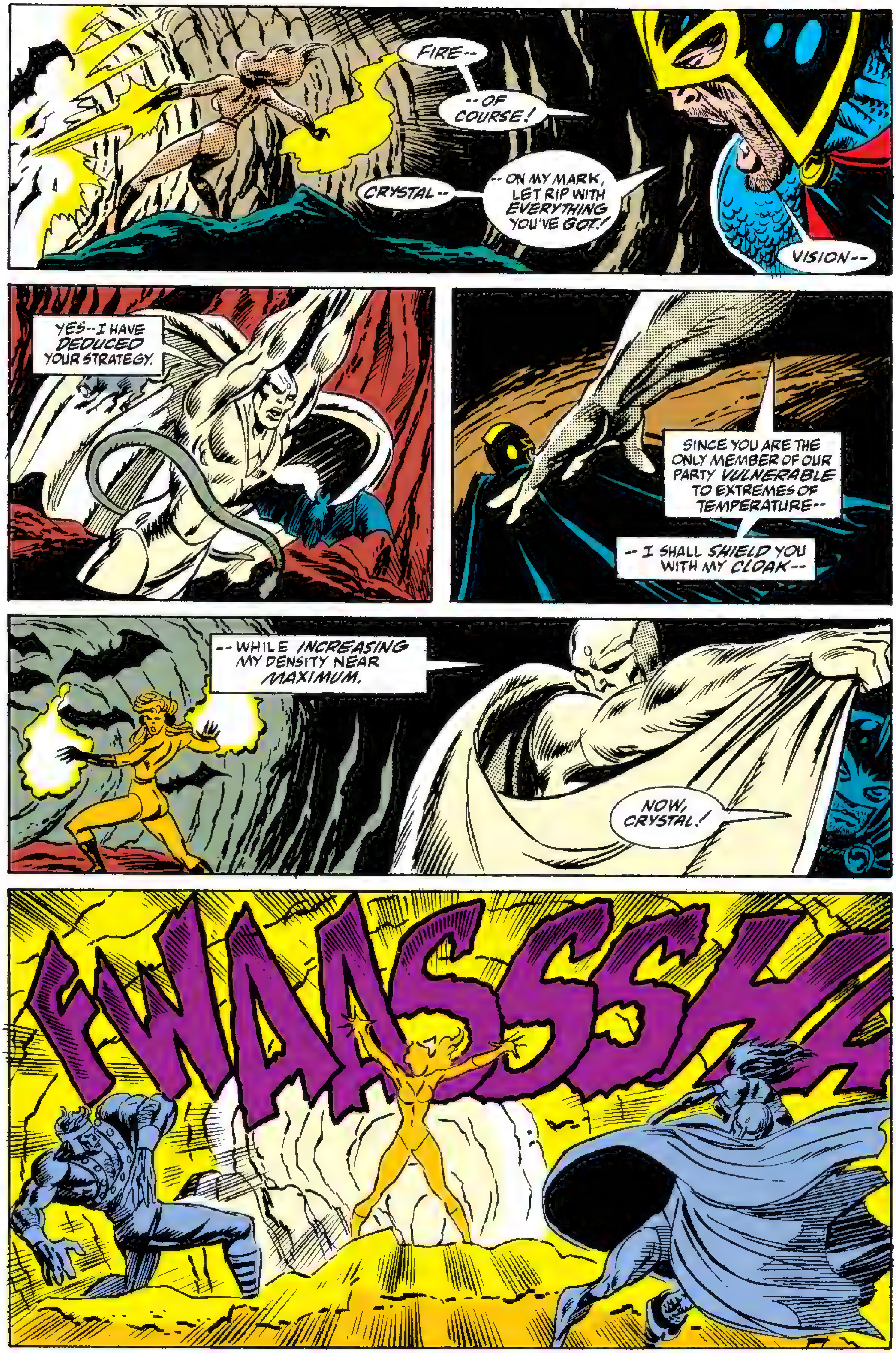

SHORTLY...
...IT WAS IN THE CAVERNS THAT YOU KILLED ME...
THIS IS THE SECURI-CAM RECORDING OF THE APPARITION THE VISION AND I SAW IN THE LAB.
WE'VE GOT TROUBLE.
CLK
PARDON ME, BUT WHO EXACTLY IS THIS "GRIM REAPER," ANYWAY?
IF THE GRIM REAPER HAS BECOME POWERFUL ENOUGH TO SWAT JETLINERS OUT OF THE AIR, RE-ARRANGE MATTER, AND CREATE HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS, WELL...
BORN ERIC WILLIAMS BROTHER OF SIMON WILLIAMS, A.K.A. WONDER MAN.
HE HELD THE AVENGERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS BROTHER'S APPARENT DEATH YEARS AGO.
HE ATTEMPTED TO GAIN REVENGE ON US A NUMBER OF TIMES, FINALLY CULMINATING IN AN ATTEMPT WHICH LED TO HIS DEATH.
RECENTLY, ACCORDING TO THE WEST COAST AVENGERS RECORDS, HE RETURNED FROM THE GRAVE AS A SUPERNATURAL BEING--
-- THOUGH STILL DRIVEN BY A HATRED OF THE AVENGERS.
THE WEST COASTERS MIGHT KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM NOW--
--BUT WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO REACH THEM.
IT'S UP TO US.
LET US BE OFF TO SMITE YON STYGIAN SCOUNDREL, THEN.
HERCULES HAS A POINT... TIME MAY BE OF THE ESSENCE.
I CONCUR.
THAT'S EASY FOR YOU GUYS TO SAY.
NONE OF YOU HAS MUCH OF A GRASP OF THE CONCEPT OF DEATH.

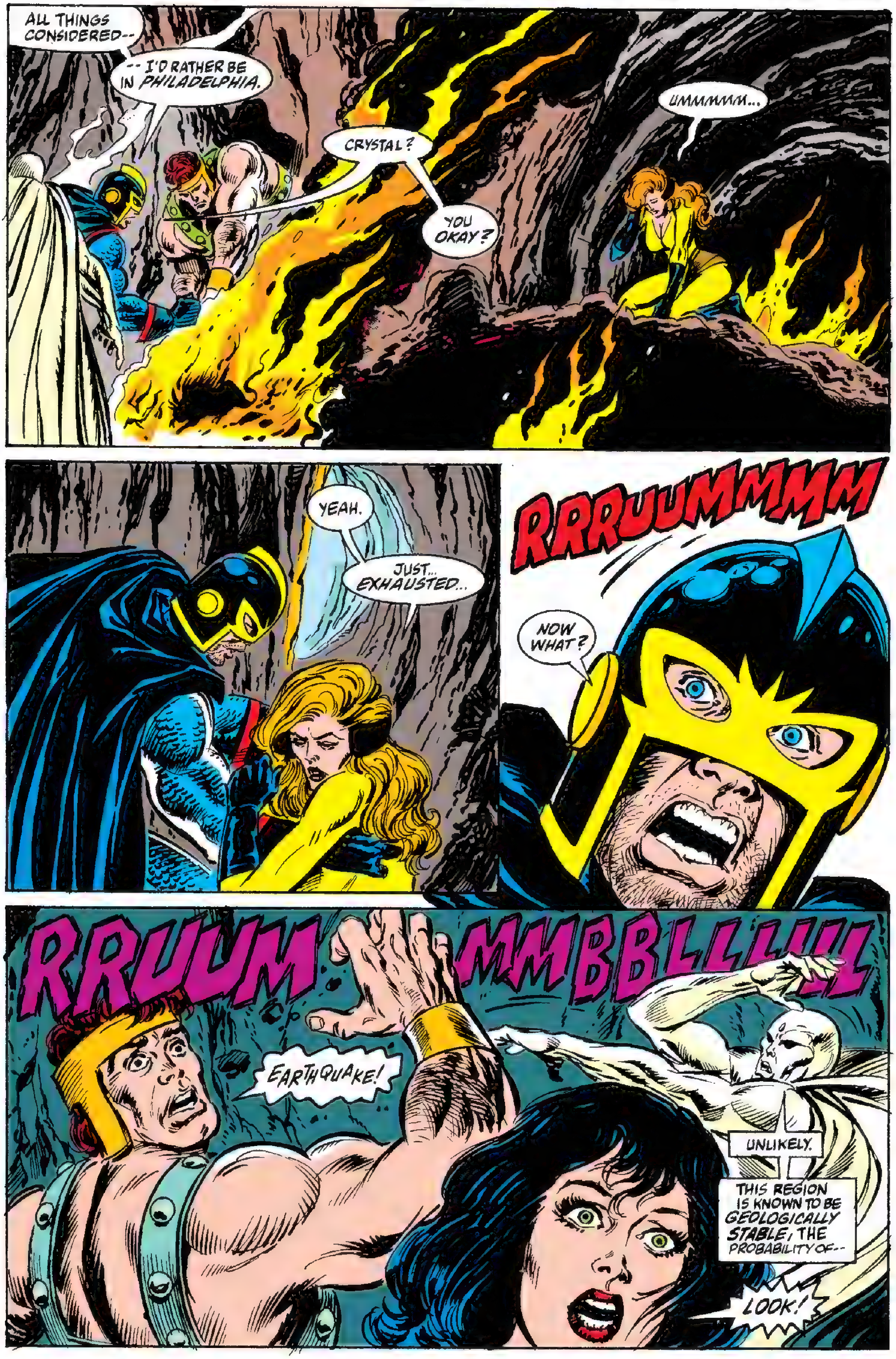

AND SO...
LET ME KNOW WHEN WE GET THERE, VISION.
I SUGGEST WE SET DOWN IN THAT CLEARING AHEAD.
THE CAVERNS TO WHICH THE REAPER REFERS ARE ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY.
FSSSHHHH
THIS IS THE ENTRANCE.
AH, THIS DOTH REMIND ME OF THE TIME WHEN I DIDST DESCEND INTO THE DEPTHS OF HADES--
--WHERE I SMOTE THREE-HEADED CEREBUS.
MAYHAP YOU ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THAT TALE?
SIGH
IT DOES RING A BELL...
'TWAS BLACK AS PITCH, AND I HAD NO SUCH LUMINOUS CONTRIVANCE AS WE CARRY NOW...
THE CLIMB DOWN INTO THE UNDERWORLD ALONE TOOK THREE MONTHS ENTIRE!
WHY, 'ERE I CROSSED THE RIVER STYX I DID ENCOUNTER RATS THE SIZE OF BENGAL TIGERS...

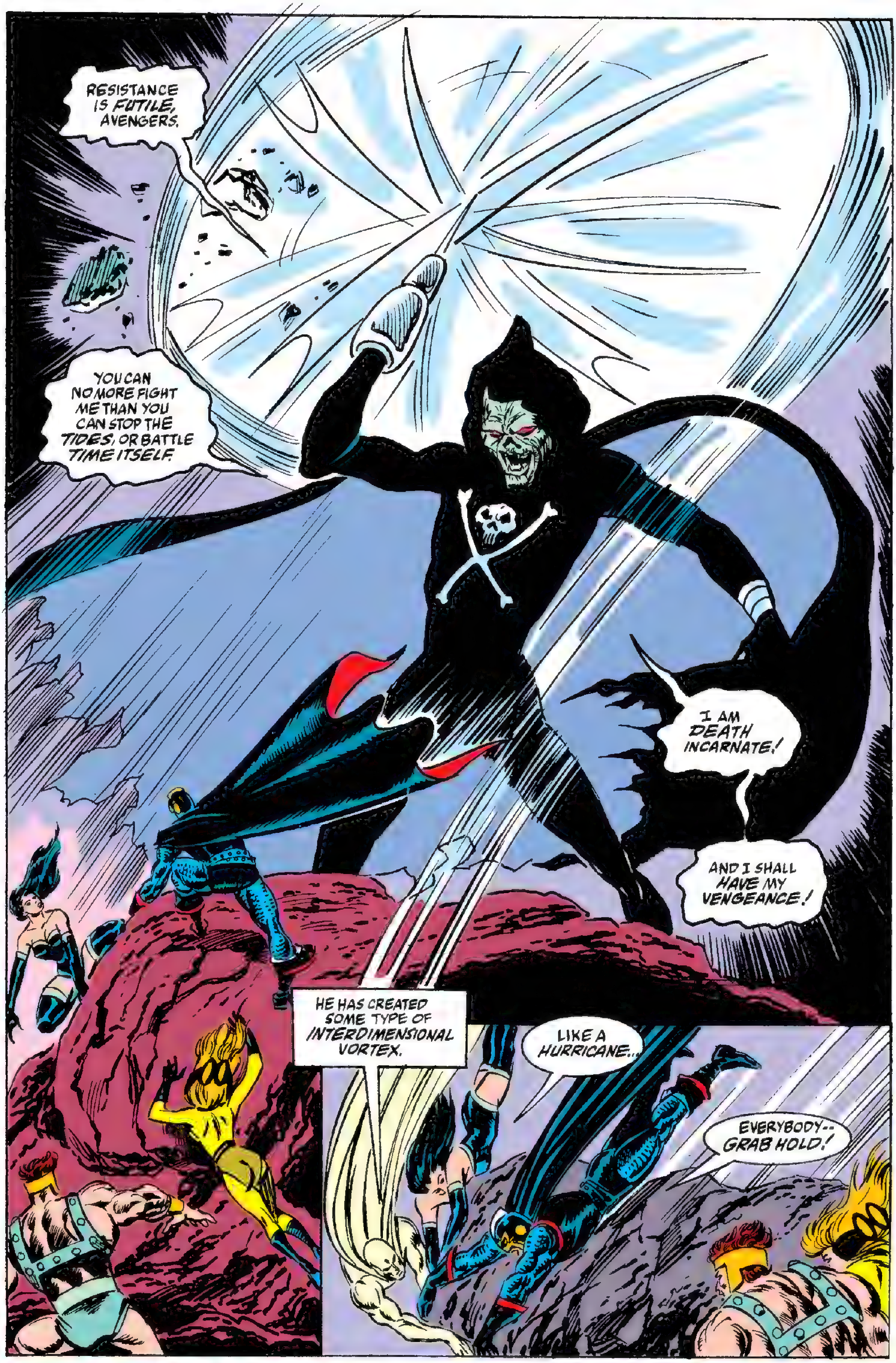

MEANWHILE, IN THE DARKNESS BELOW...
THEY HAVE ARRIVED.
UNSUSPECTING FOOLS!
GO MY PETS-- GO AND ATTEND OUR GUESTS--
--WELCOME THEM INTO THE DARKNESS!
...SO PUTRID WAS CEREBUS'S FETID BREATH, THAT IT DIDST RUIN A PERFECTLY GOOD TUNIC, AND--
QUIET, PLEASE.
MY AUDIO SENSORS DETECT MOVEMENT AHEAD.
SOMETHING IS APPROACHING.

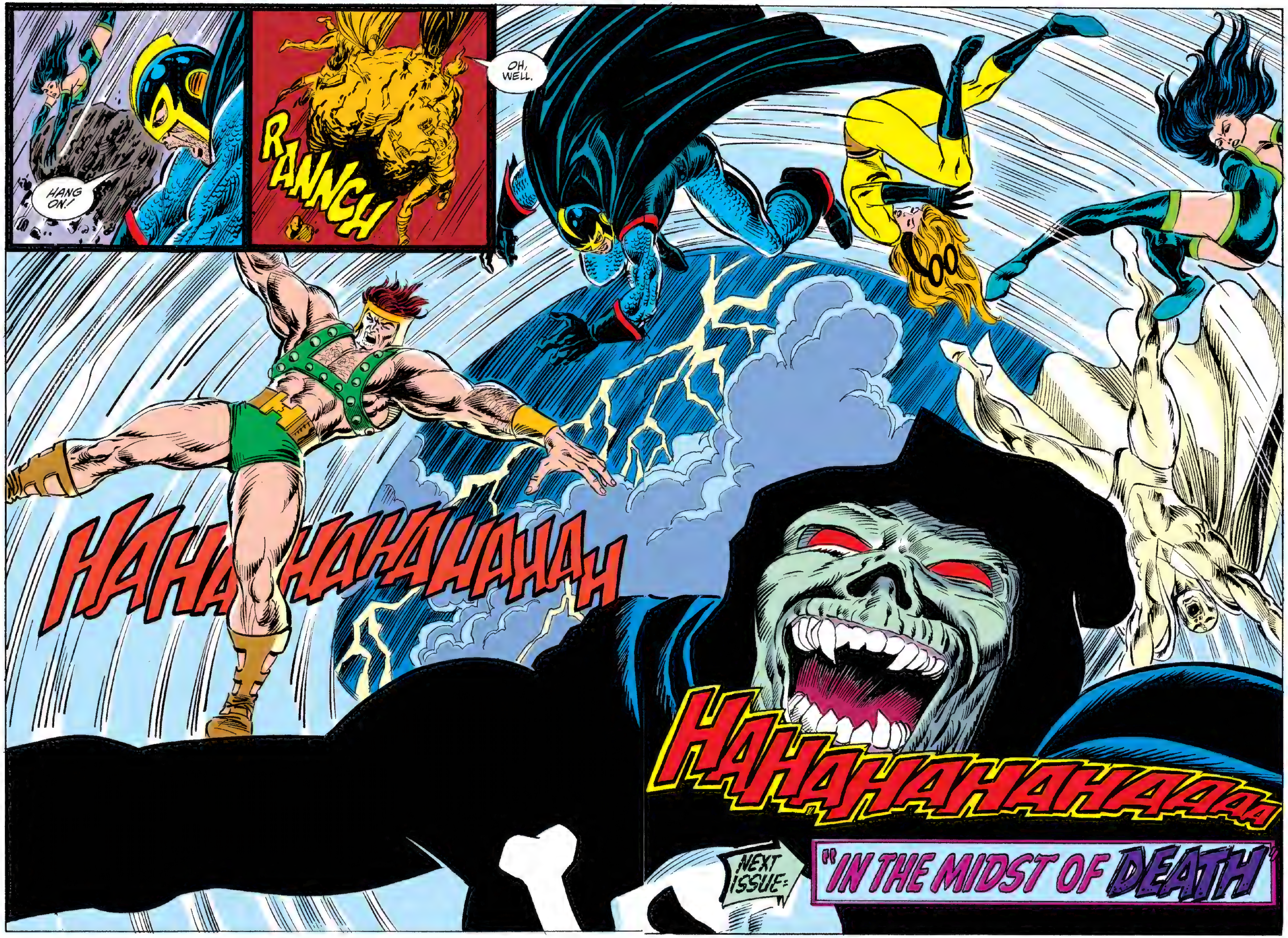

DEFENSIVE POSITIONS!
YECCH...
UUULLGGGGHH
CRINCH
BACK, FOUL CARRION--
--GET THEE HENCE, I SAY!
CAREFUL, PEOPLE--
--THESE THINGS AREN'T NATURAL!
INDEED.
DESPITE THEIR RESEMBLANCE TO TERRESTRIAL VERMIN--
--THEY SEEM TO BE COMPOSED OF SOME TYPE OF EXTRADIMENSIONAL ENERGY WITH ITS OWN RUDIMENTARY INTELLIGENCE.


BAH!
NO MATTER HOW MANY I SMITE--
--THERE SEEM TO BE YET MORE AND MORE OF THE CREATURES.
IT REMINDETH ME OF MY BATTLE WITH THE HYDRA, WHICH COULD--
WE GET THE POINT, HERCULES--
SHRAK
SERSI--CAN'T YOU TURN THEM TO TOADSTOOLS OR SOMETHING?
THEY HAVE NO MOLECULAR STRUCTURE TO MANIPULATE.
I HAVE NEVER SEEN THE LIKE.
I THEORIZE THAT THESE CREATURES ARE MAGICAL IN NATURE.
THUS, OUR RATHER INEFFECTIVE EFFORTS TO COMBAT THEM BECOME MORE EASILY UNDERSTOOD.
MARVELOUS.
DO YOU HAVE ANY CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS?
INSUFFICIENT DATA.
FWAASSH
OH, GROSS!


FIRE--
--OF COURSE!
CRYSTAL--
--ON MY MARK, LET RIP WITH *EVERYTHING* YOU'VE GOT!
VISION--
YES--I HAVE *DEDUCED* YOUR STRATEGY.
SINCE YOU ARE THE ONLY MEMBER OF OUR PARTY *VULNERABLE* TO EXTREMES OF TEMPERATURE--
--I SHALL *SHIELD* YOU WITH MY *CLOAK*--
--WHILE *INCREASING* MY DENSITY NEAR *MAXIMUM.*
NOW, CRYSTAL!
FWASSH


ALL THINGS CONSIDERED--
-- I'D RATHER BE IN PHILADELPHIA.
CRYSTAL?
YOU OKAY?
UMMMMM...
YEAH.
JUST... EXHAUSTED...
RRRUUMMMM
NOW WHAT?
RRUUMMMBBLLLLL
EARTHQUAKE!
UNLIKELY.
THIS REGION IS KNOWN TO BE GEOLOGICALLY STABLE, THE PROBABILITY OF--
LOOK!

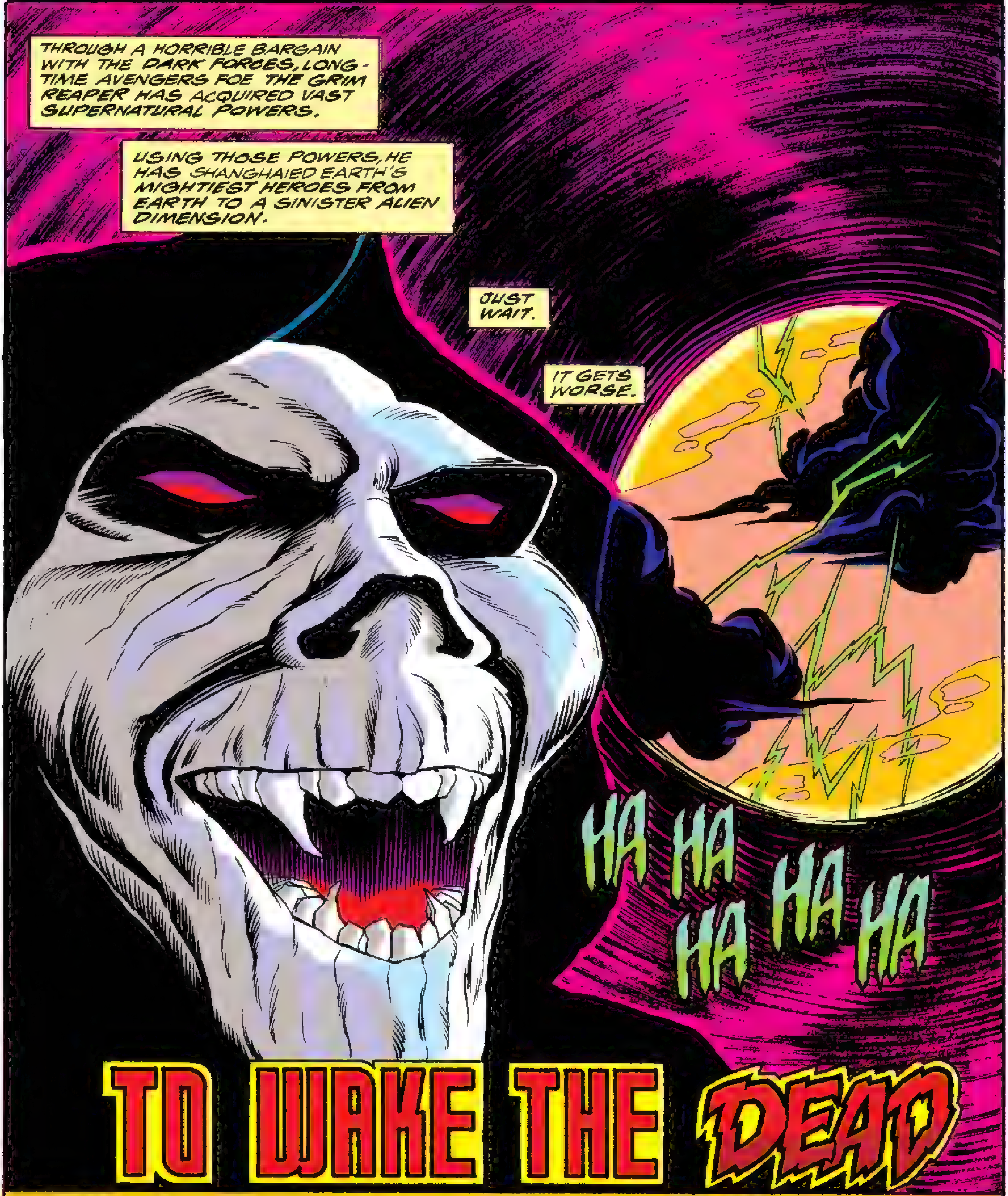

RESISTANCE IS *FUTILE,* AVENGERS.
YOU CAN NO MORE FIGHT ME THAN YOU CAN STOP THE *TIDES,* OR BATTLE *TIME ITSELF.*
I AM *DEATH* INCARNATE!
AND I SHALL *HAVE* MY *VENGEANCE!*
HE HAS CREATED SOME TYPE OF *INTERDIMENSIONAL* VORTEX.
LIKE A *HURRICANE...*
EVERYBODY-- *GRAB HOLD!*


HANG ON!
RANNCH
OH, WELL.
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH
HAHAHAHAHAHAAAA
NEXT ISSUE:
"IN THE MIDST OF DEATH"

MARVEL COMICS
FEAR THE REAPER -- PART II OF III
AVENGERS
© 1992 MARVEL ENT. GROUP INC
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN / UK 70p
353
LATE SEPT
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
McWYMAN • PALMER

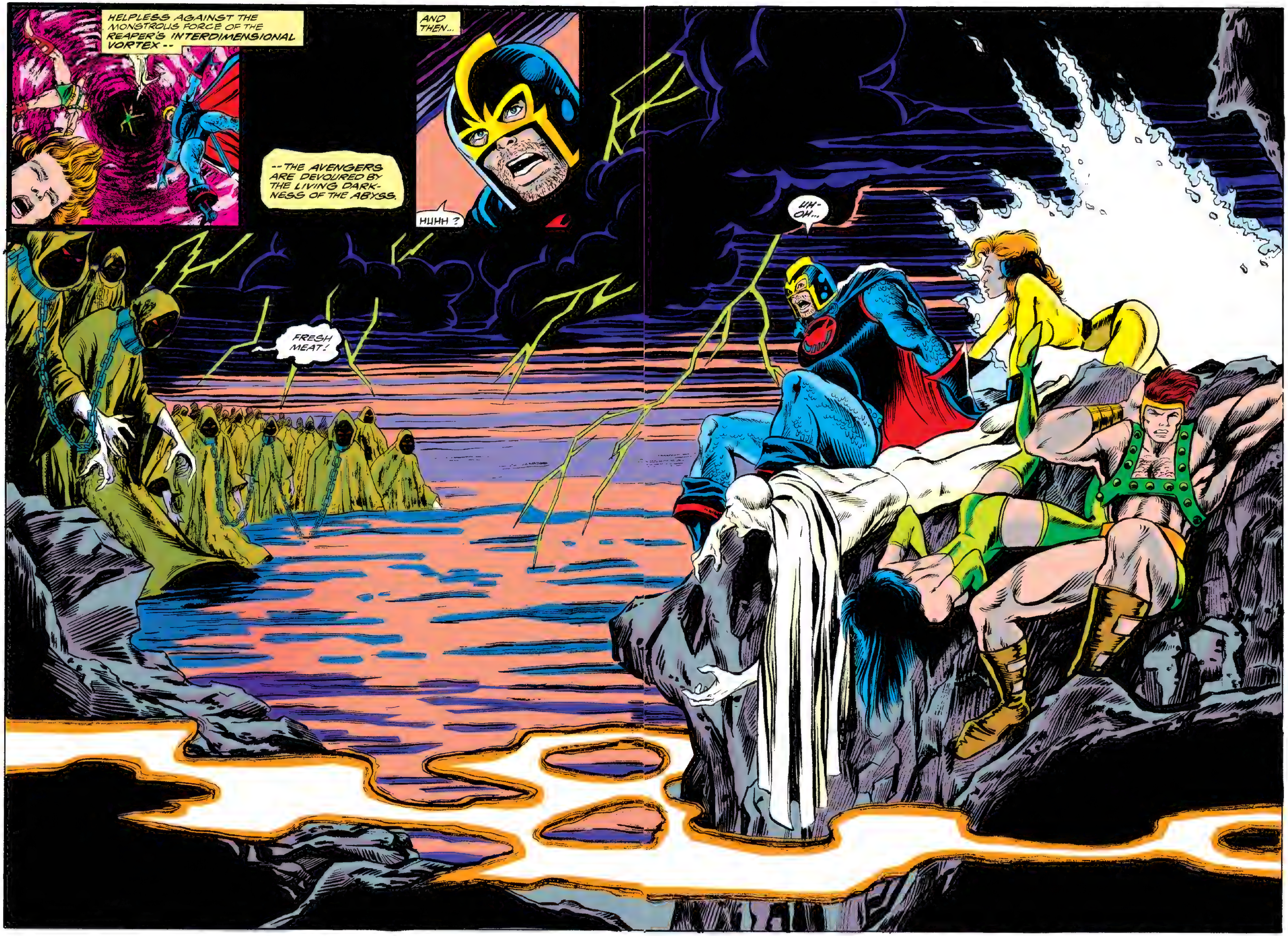
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

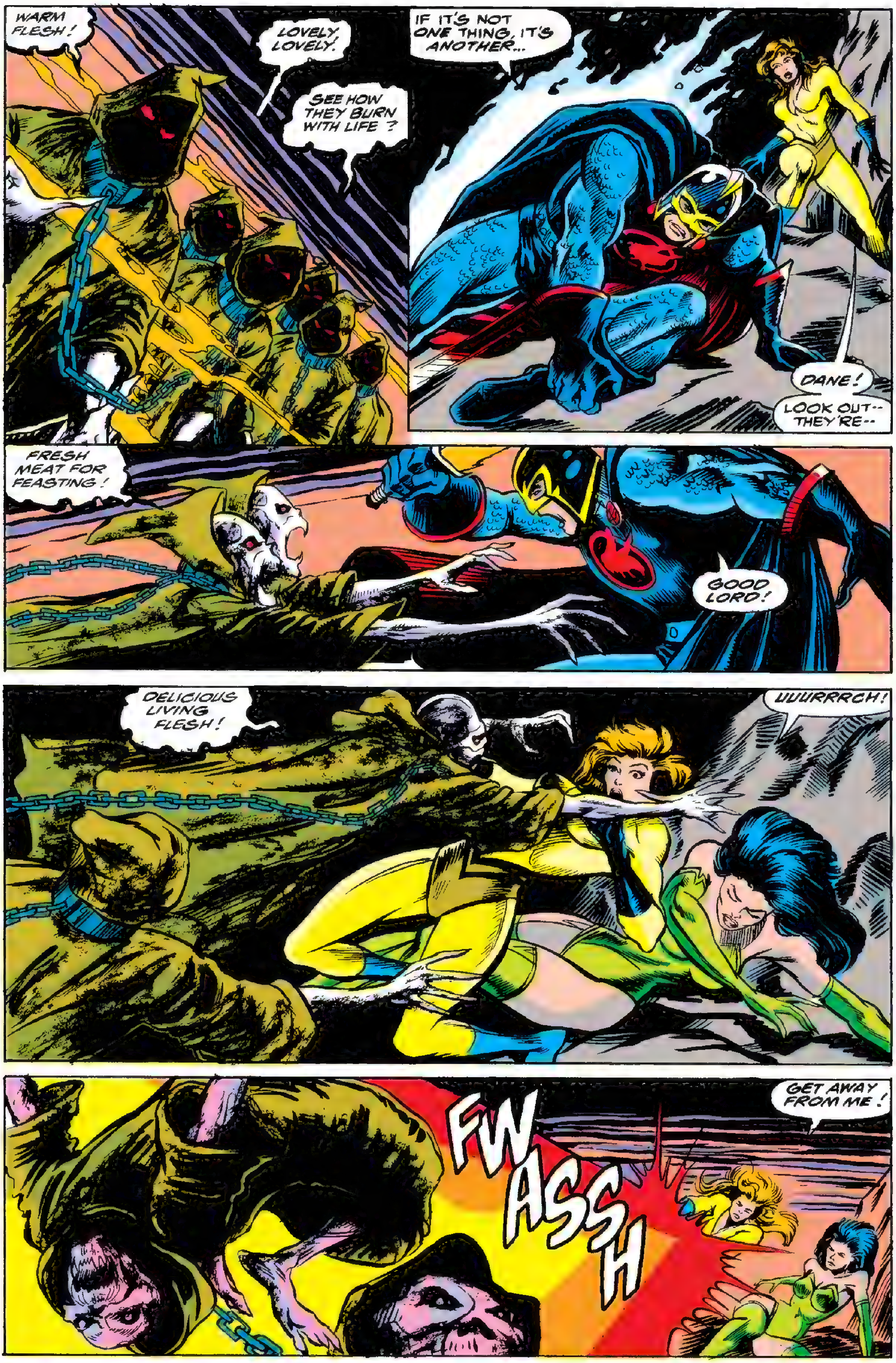
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

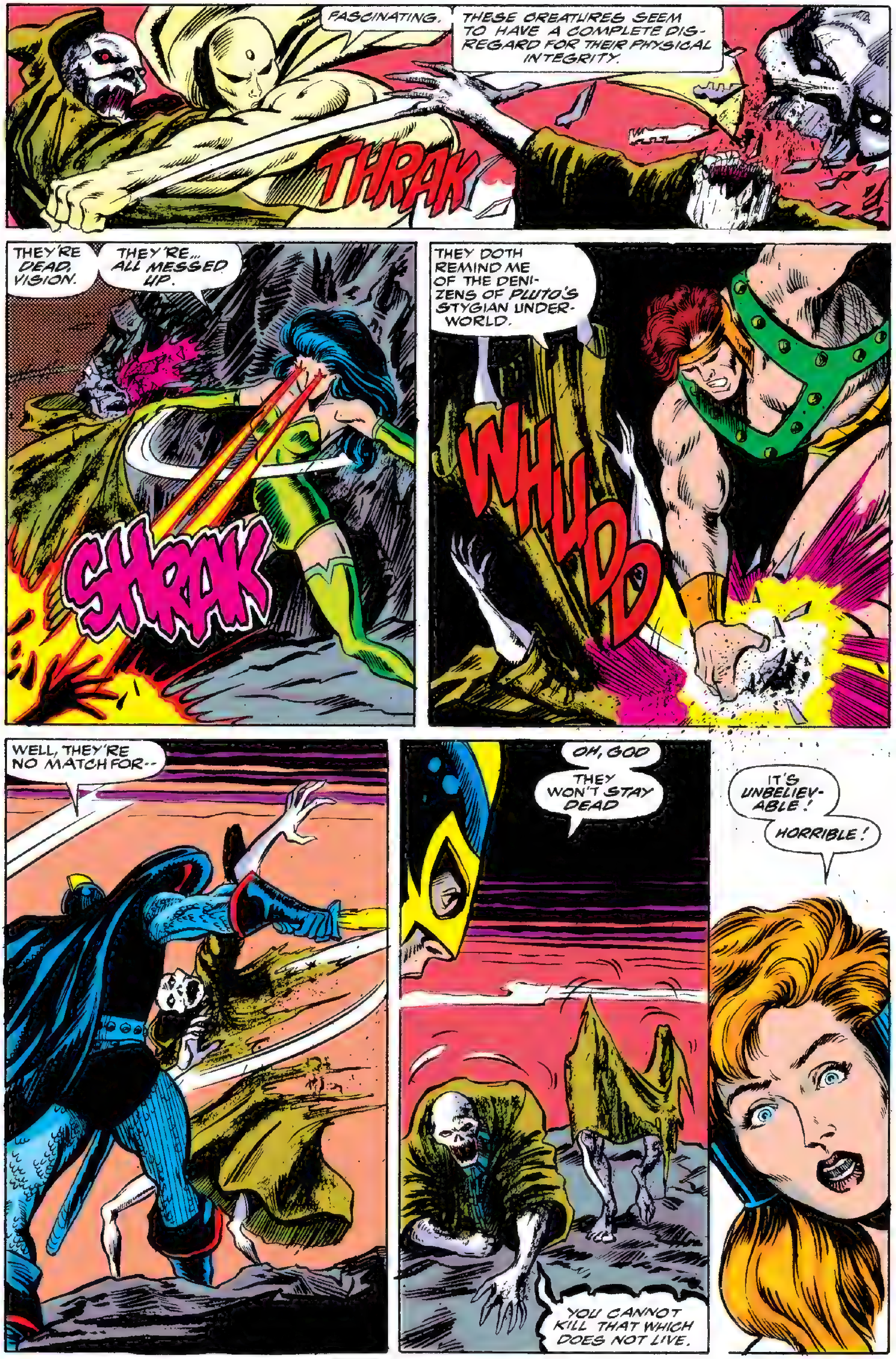

THROUGH A HORRIBLE BARGAIN WITH THE DARK FORCES, LONG-TIME AVENGERS FOE THE GRIM REAPER HAS ACQUIRED VAST SUPERNATURAL POWERS.
USING THOSE POWERS, HE HAS SHANGHAIED EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES FROM EARTH TO A SINISTER ALIEN DIMENSION.
JUST WAIT.
IT GETS WORSE.
HA HA HA HA HA HA

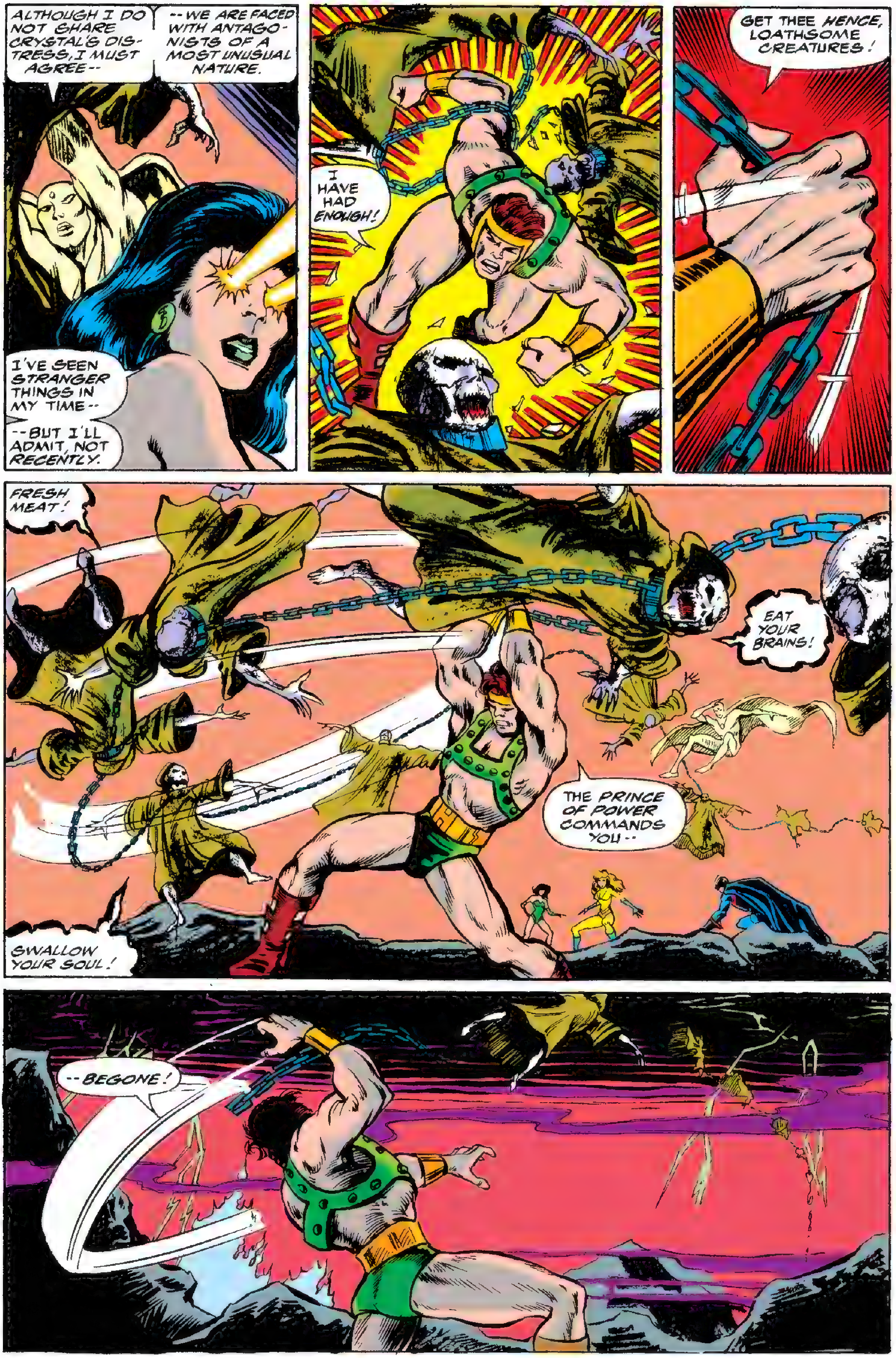
TO WAKE THE DEAD

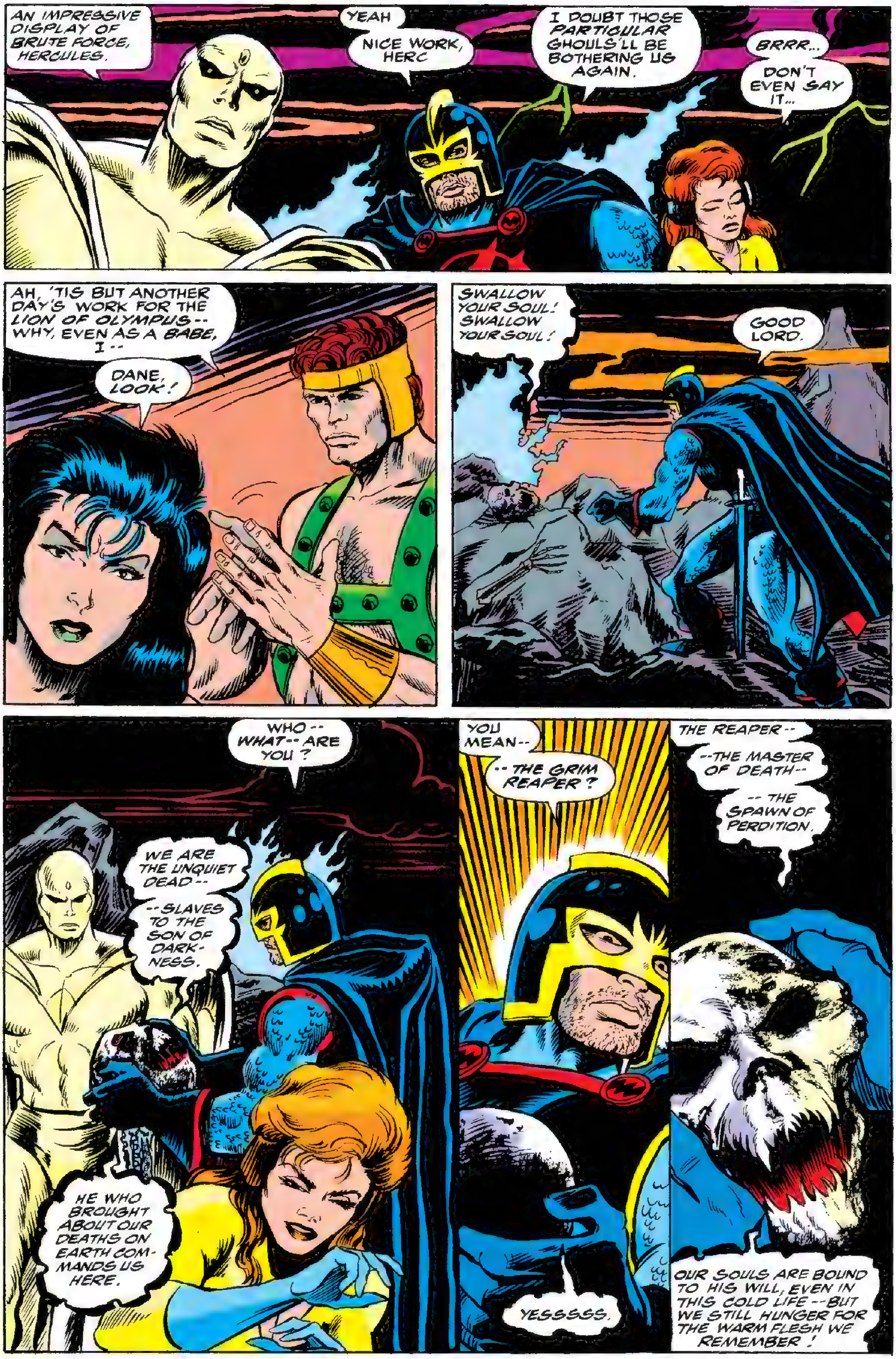
LEN KAMINSKI WRITER | M.C. WYMAN PENCILER | ARIANE INKER | CHRIS ELIOPOULOS LETTERER | ARIANE & ROB TOKAR COLORISTS | RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR | TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

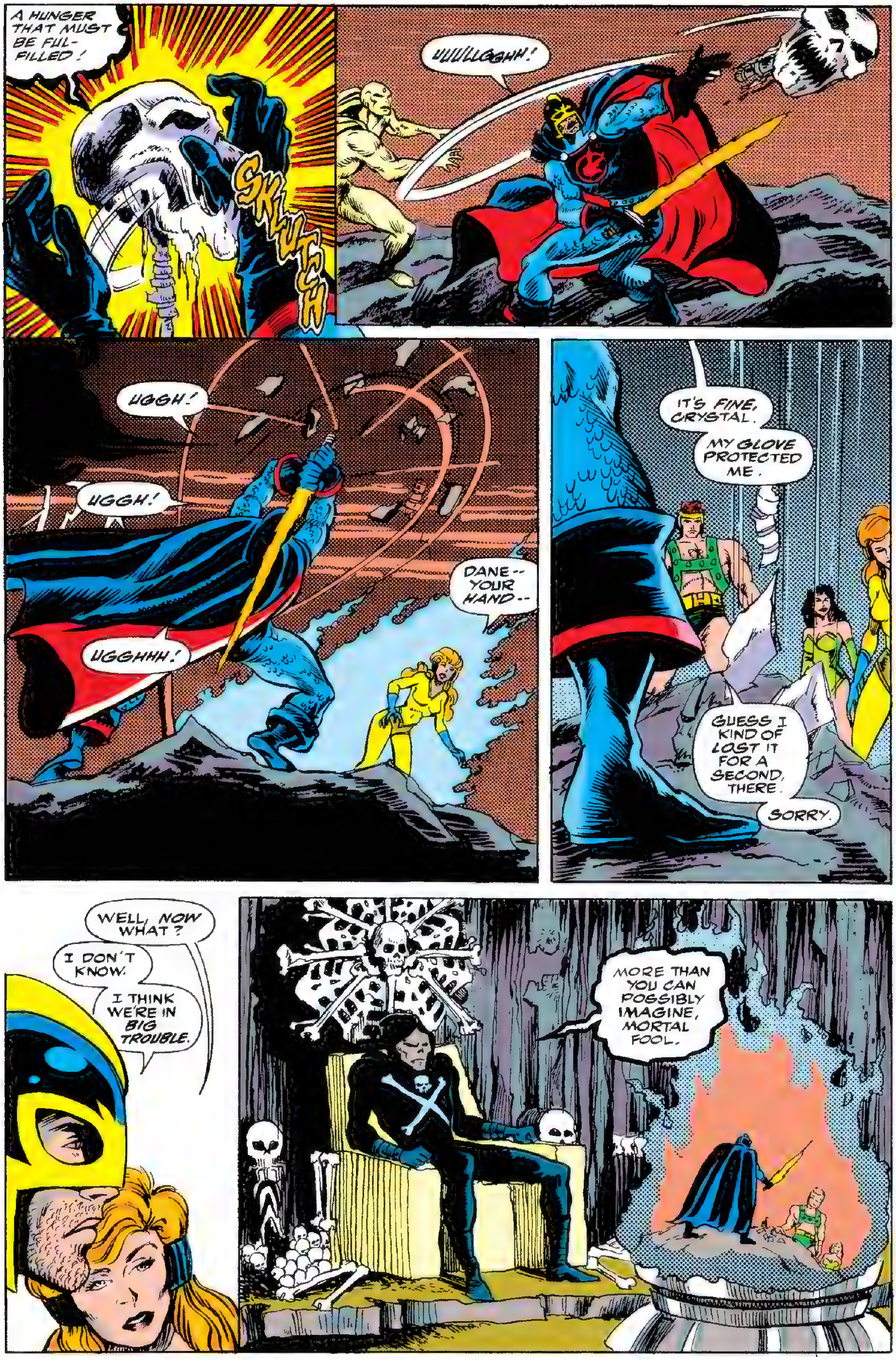

HELPLESS AGAINST THE MONSTROUS FORCE OF THE REAPER'S INTERDIMENSIONAL VORTEX --
AND THEN...
HUHH?
-- THE AVENGERS ARE DEVOURED BY THE LIVING DARKNESS OF THE ABYSS.
FRESH MEAT!
UH-OH...

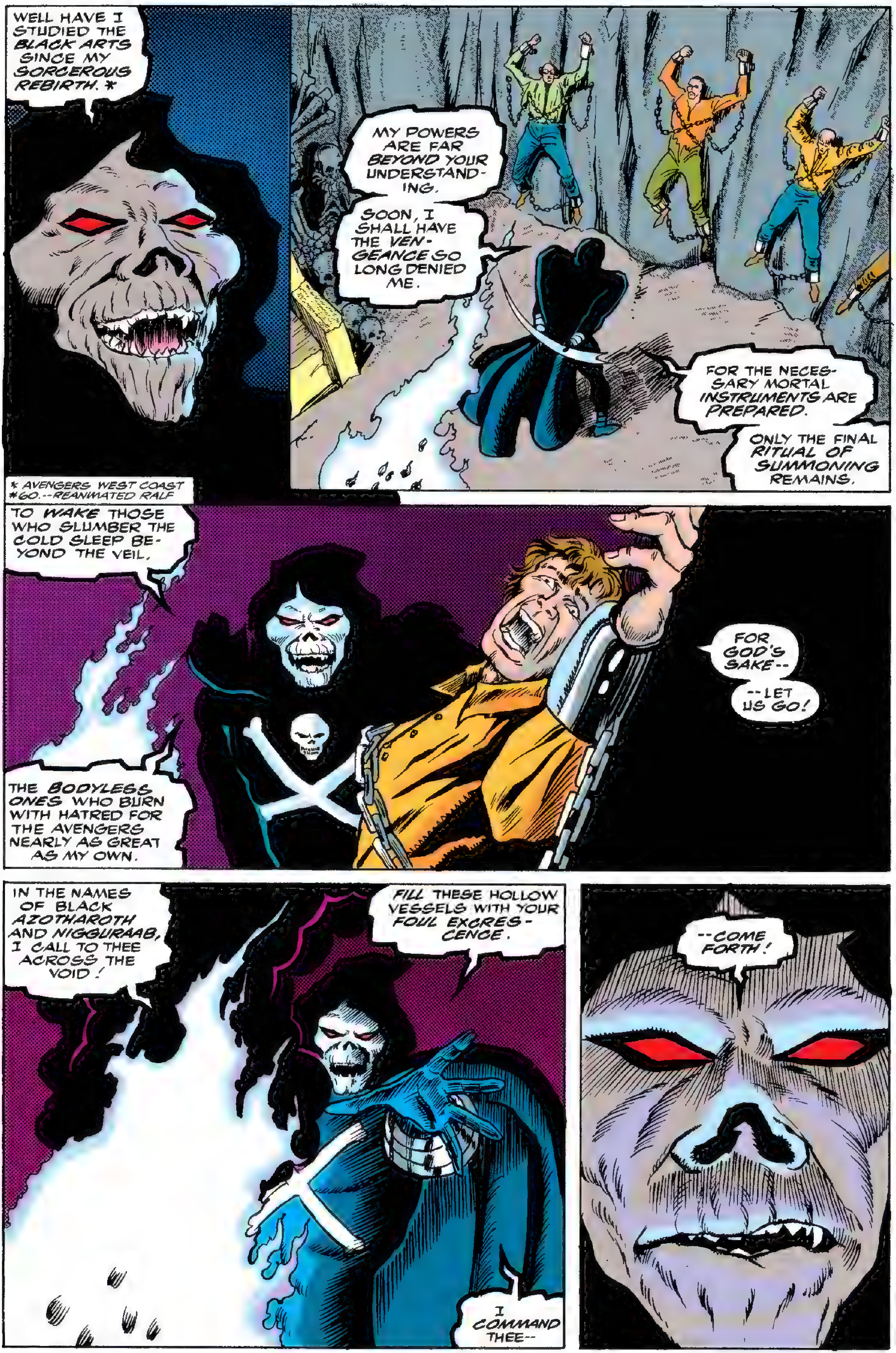

WARM FLESH!
LOVELY, LOVELY.
SEE HOW THEY BURN WITH LIFE?
IF IT'S NOT ONE THING, IT'S ANOTHER...
DANE!
LOOK OUT-- THEY'RE--
FRESH MEAT FOR FEASTING!
GOOD LORD!
DELICIOUS LIVING FLESH!
UUURRRCH!
FWASSH
GET AWAY FROM ME!

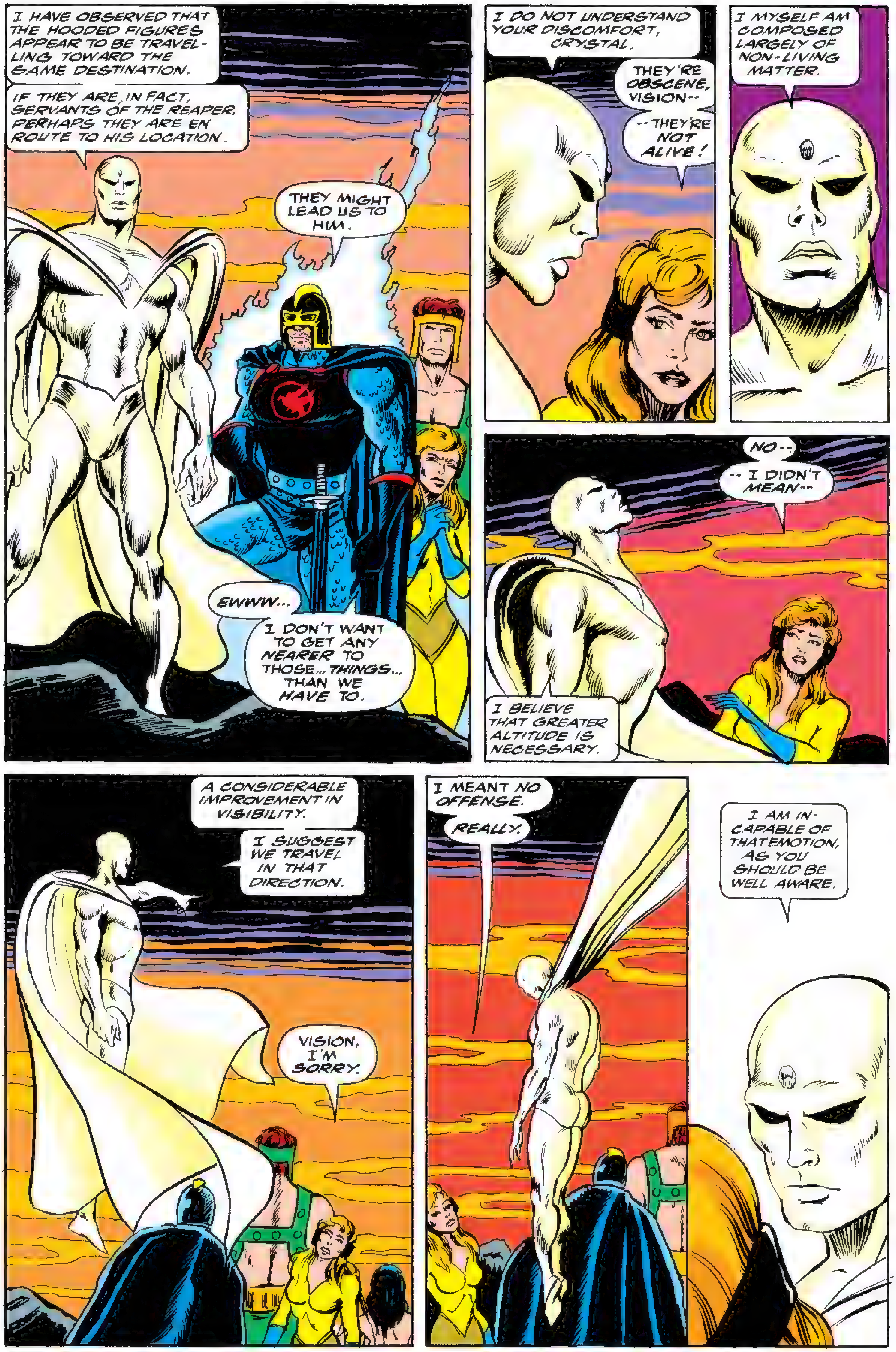

FASCINATING.
THESE CREATURES SEEM TO HAVE A COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR THEIR PHYSICAL INTEGRITY.
THRAK
THEY'RE DEAD, VISION.
THEY'RE... ALL MESSED UP.
SHRAK
THEY DOTH REMIND ME OF THE DENIZENS OF PLUTO'S STYGIAN UNDERWORLD.
WHUDD
WELL, THEY'RE NO MATCH FOR--
OH, GOD
THEY WON'T STAY DEAD
YOU CANNOT KILL THAT WHICH DOES NOT LIVE.
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!
HORRIBLE!

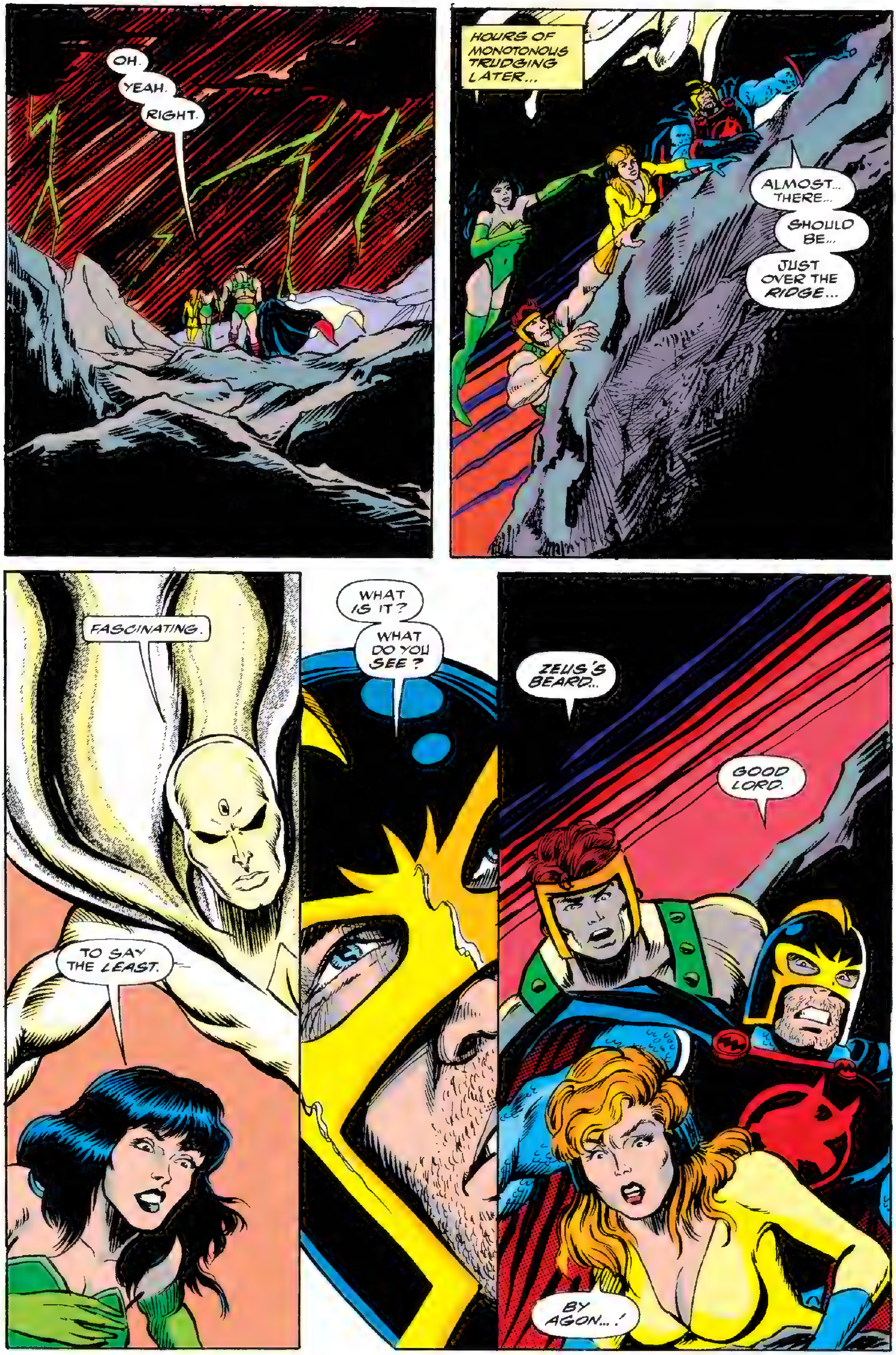

ALTHOUGH I DO NOT SHARE CRYSTAL'S DISTRESS, I MUST AGREE--
--WE ARE FACED WITH ANTAGONISTS OF A MOST UNUSUAL NATURE.
I'VE SEEN STRANGER THINGS IN MY TIME--
--BUT I'LL ADMIT, NOT RECENTLY.
I HAVE HAD ENOUGH!
GET THEE *HENCE*, LOATHSOME CREATURES!
FRESH MEAT!
EAT YOUR BRAINS!
THE *PRINCE OF POWER* COMMANDS YOU--
SWALLOW YOUR SOUL!
--*BEGONE!*

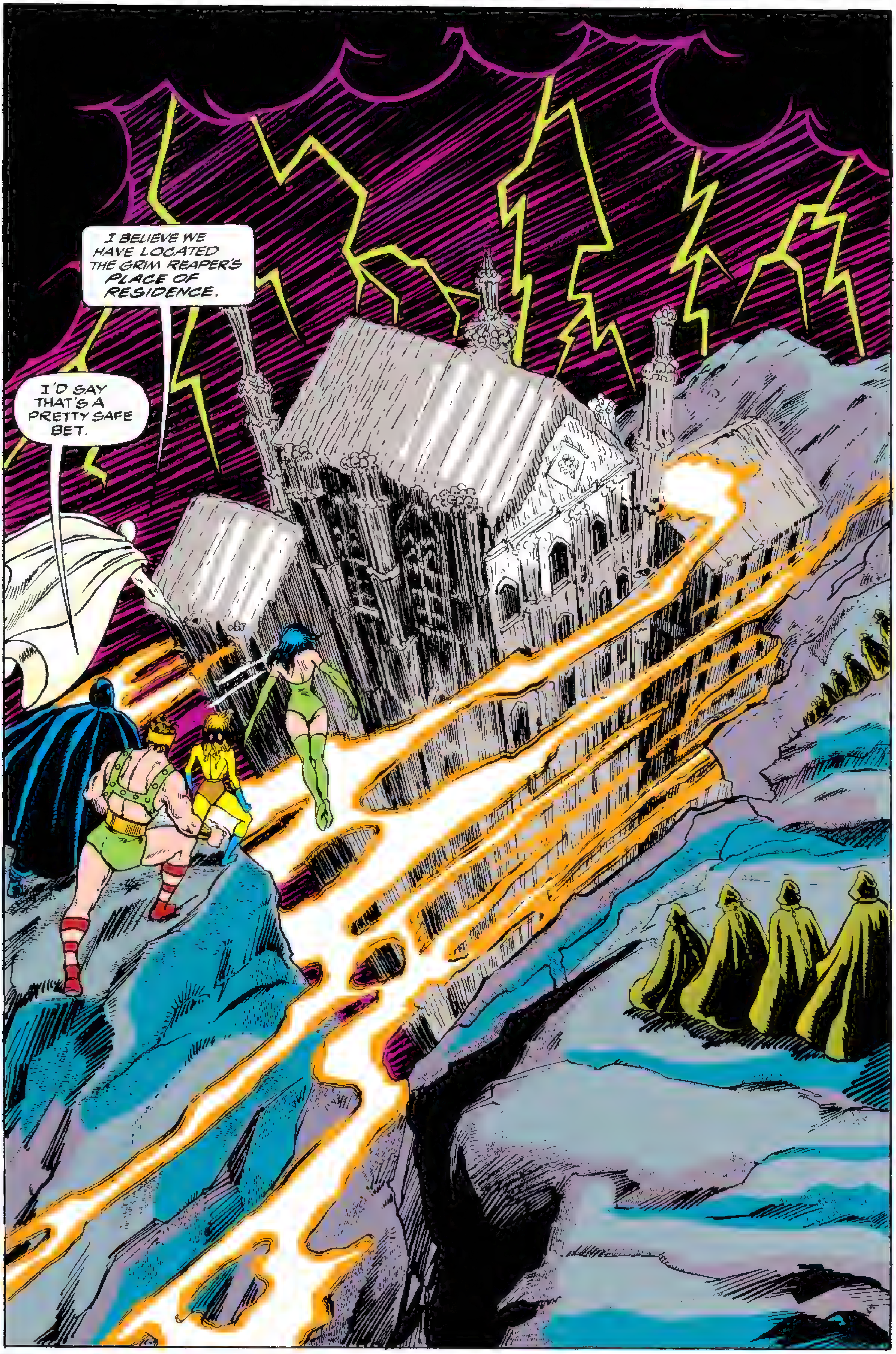

AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF BRUTE FORCE, HERCULES.
YEAH
NICE WORK, HERC
I DOUBT THOSE PARTICULAR GHOULS'LL BE BOTHERING US AGAIN.
BRRR...
DON'T EVEN SAY IT...
AH, 'TIS BUT ANOTHER DAY'S WORK FOR THE LION OF OLYMPUS -- WHY, EVEN AS A BABE, I --
DANE, LOOK!
SWALLOW YOUR SOUL! SWALLOW YOUR SOUL!
GOOD LORD.
WHO -- WHAT -- ARE YOU?
WE ARE THE UNQUIET DEAD --
-- SLAVES TO THE SON OF DARKNESS.
HE WHO BROUGHT ABOUT OUR DEATHS ON EARTH COMMANDS US HERE.
YOU MEAN --
-- THE GRIM REAPER?
YESSSSS.
THE REAPER --
-- THE MASTER OF DEATH --
-- THE SPAWN OF PERDITION.
OUR SOULS ARE BOUND TO HIS WILL, EVEN IN THIS COLD LIFE -- BUT WE STILL HUNGER FOR THE WARM FLESH WE REMEMBER!

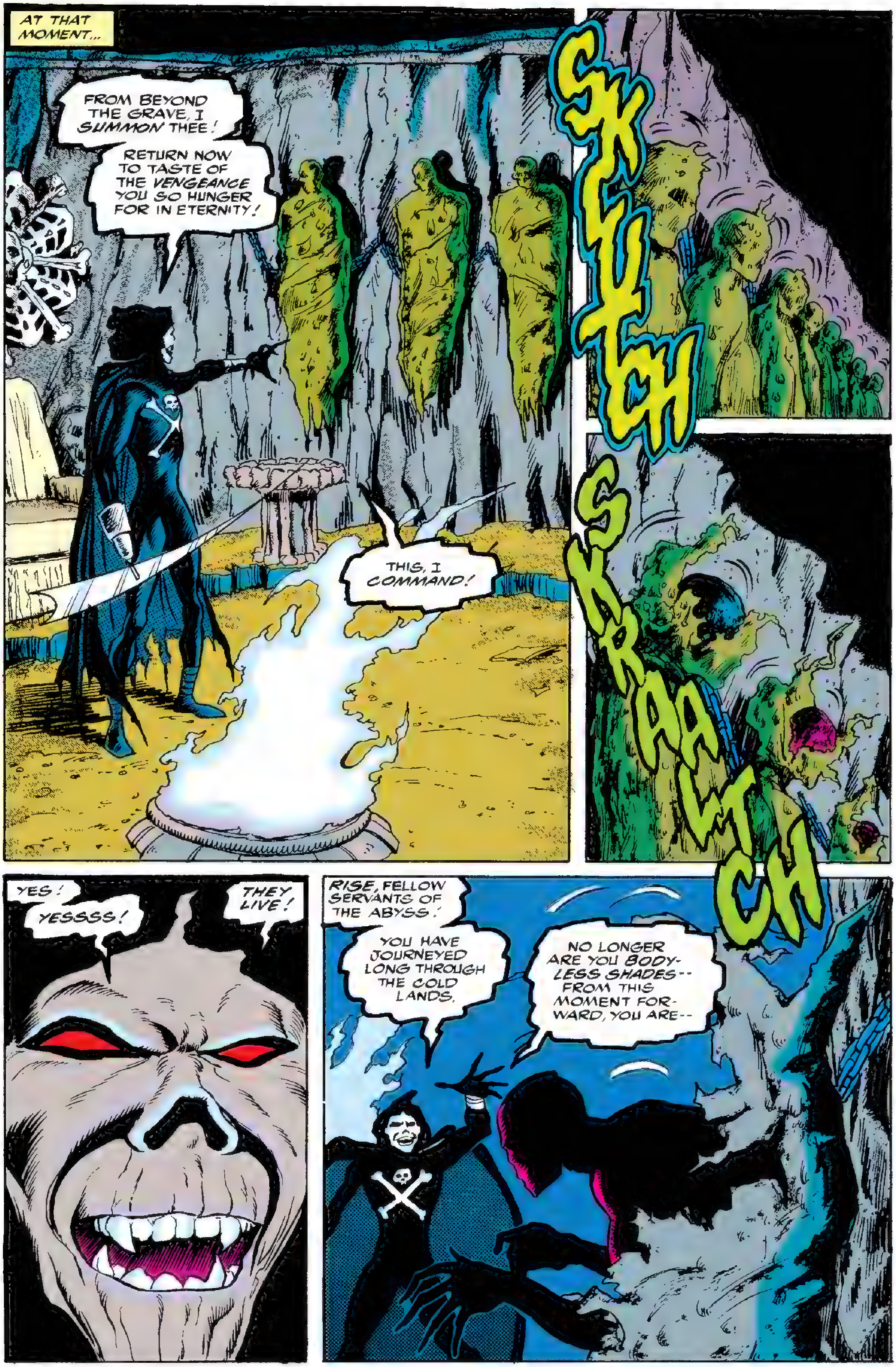

A HUNGER THAT MUST BE FULFILLED!
SKLUTCH
UUULLGGHH!
UGGH!
UGGH!
UGGHHH!
DANE-- YOUR HAND--
IT'S FINE, CRYSTAL.
MY GLOVE PROTECTED ME.
GUESS I KIND OF LOST IT FOR A SECOND, THERE.
SORRY.
WELL, NOW WHAT?
I DON'T KNOW.
I THINK WE'RE IN BIG TROUBLE.
MORE THAN YOU CAN POSSIBLY IMAGINE, MORTAL FOOL.

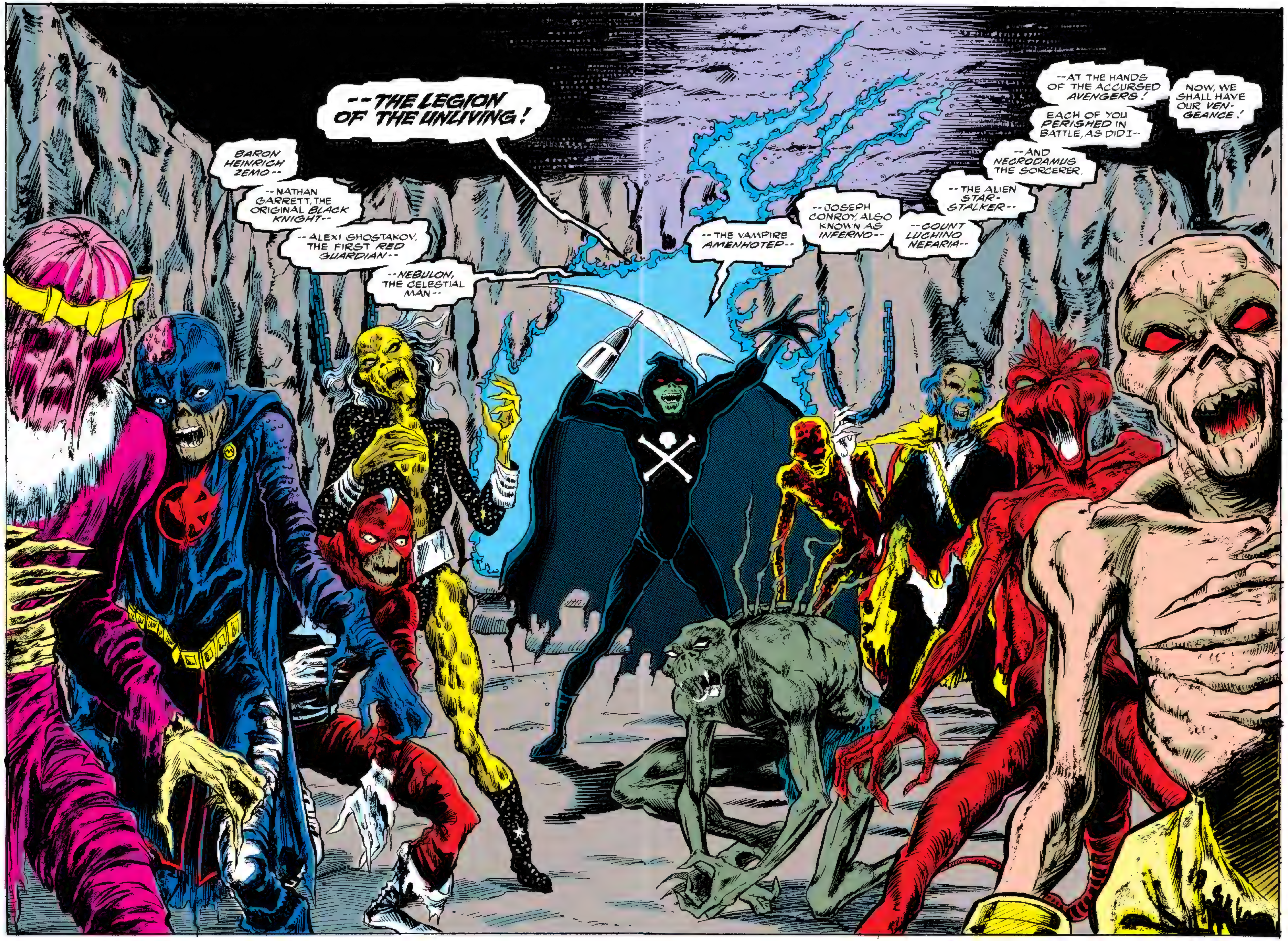

WELL HAVE I STUDIED THE BLACK ARTS SINCE MY SORCEROUS REBIRTH.*
* AVENGERS WEST COAST #60.--REANIMATED RALF
MY POWERS ARE FAR BEYOND YOUR UNDERSTANDING.
SOON, I SHALL HAVE THE VENGEANCE SO LONG DENIED ME.
FOR THE NECESSARY MORTAL INSTRUMENTS ARE PREPARED.
ONLY THE FINAL RITUAL OF SUMMONING REMAINS.
TO WAKE THOSE WHO SLUMBER THE COLD SLEEP BEYOND THE VEIL.
THE BODYLESS ONES WHO BURN WITH HATRED FOR THE AVENGERS NEARLY AS GREAT AS MY OWN.
FOR GOD'S SAKE--
--LET US GO!
IN THE NAMES OF BLACK AZOTHAROTH AND NIGGURAAB, I CALL TO THEE ACROSS THE VOID!
FILL THESE HOLLOW VESSELS WITH YOUR FOUL EXCRESCENCE.
I COMMAND THEE--
--COME FORTH!

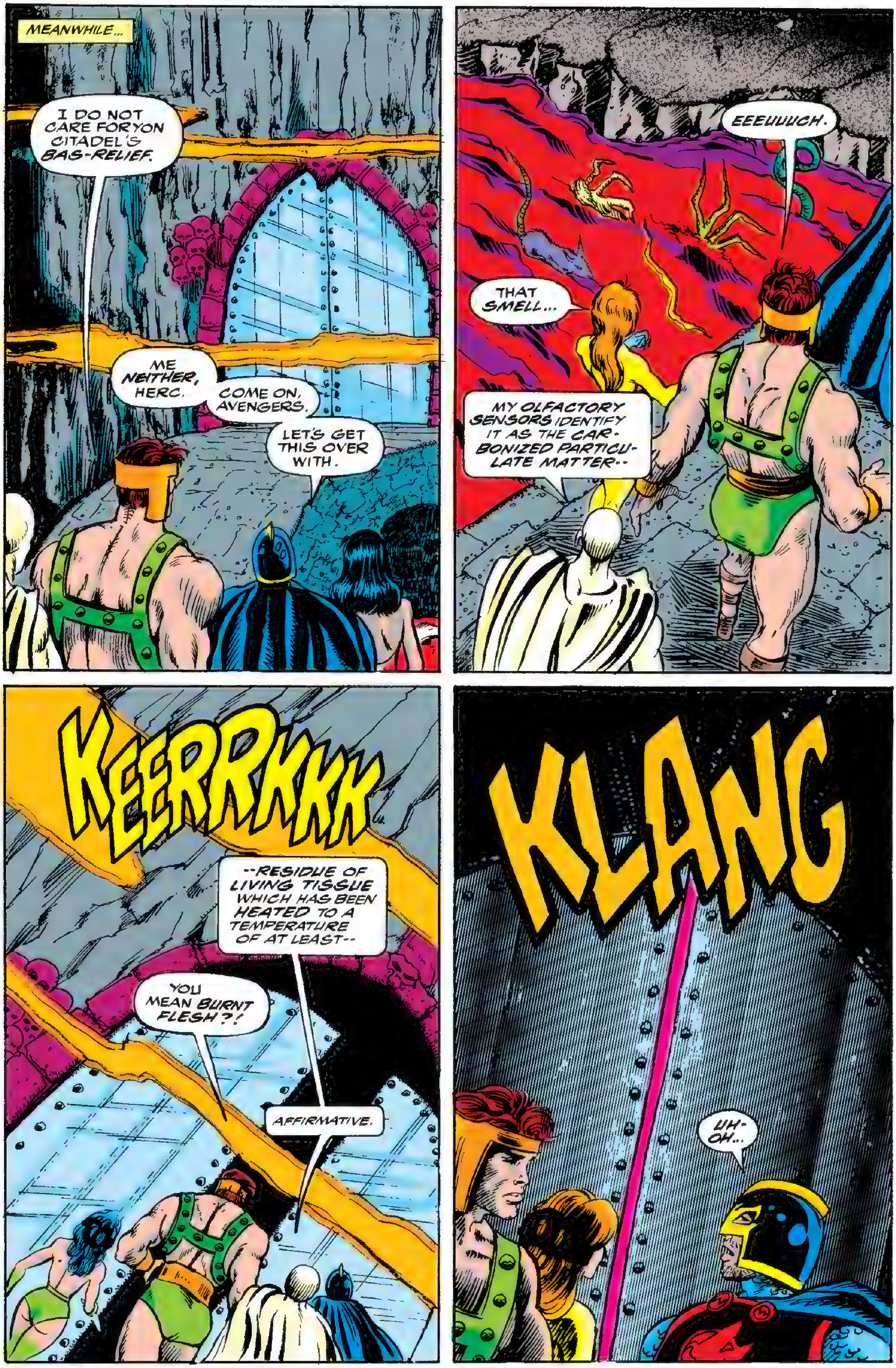

I HAVE OBSERVED THAT THE HOODED FIGURES APPEAR TO BE TRAVELLING TOWARD THE SAME DESTINATION.
IF THEY ARE, IN FACT, SERVANTS OF THE REAPER, PERHAPS THEY ARE EN ROUTE TO HIS LOCATION.
THEY MIGHT LEAD US TO HIM.
EWWW...
I DON'T WANT TO GET ANY NEARER TO THOSE... THINGS... THAN WE HAVE TO.
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR DISCOMFORT, CRYSTAL.
THEY'RE OBSCENE, VISION--
--THEY'RE NOT ALIVE!
I MYSELF AM COMPOSED LARGELY OF NON-LIVING MATTER.
NO--
-- I DIDN'T MEAN--
I BELIEVE THAT GREATER ALTITUDE IS NECESSARY.
A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT IN VISIBILITY.
I SUGGEST WE TRAVEL IN THAT DIRECTION.
VISION, I'M SORRY.
I MEANT NO OFFENSE.
REALLY.
I AM INCAPABLE OF THAT EMOTION, AS YOU SHOULD BE WELL AWARE.

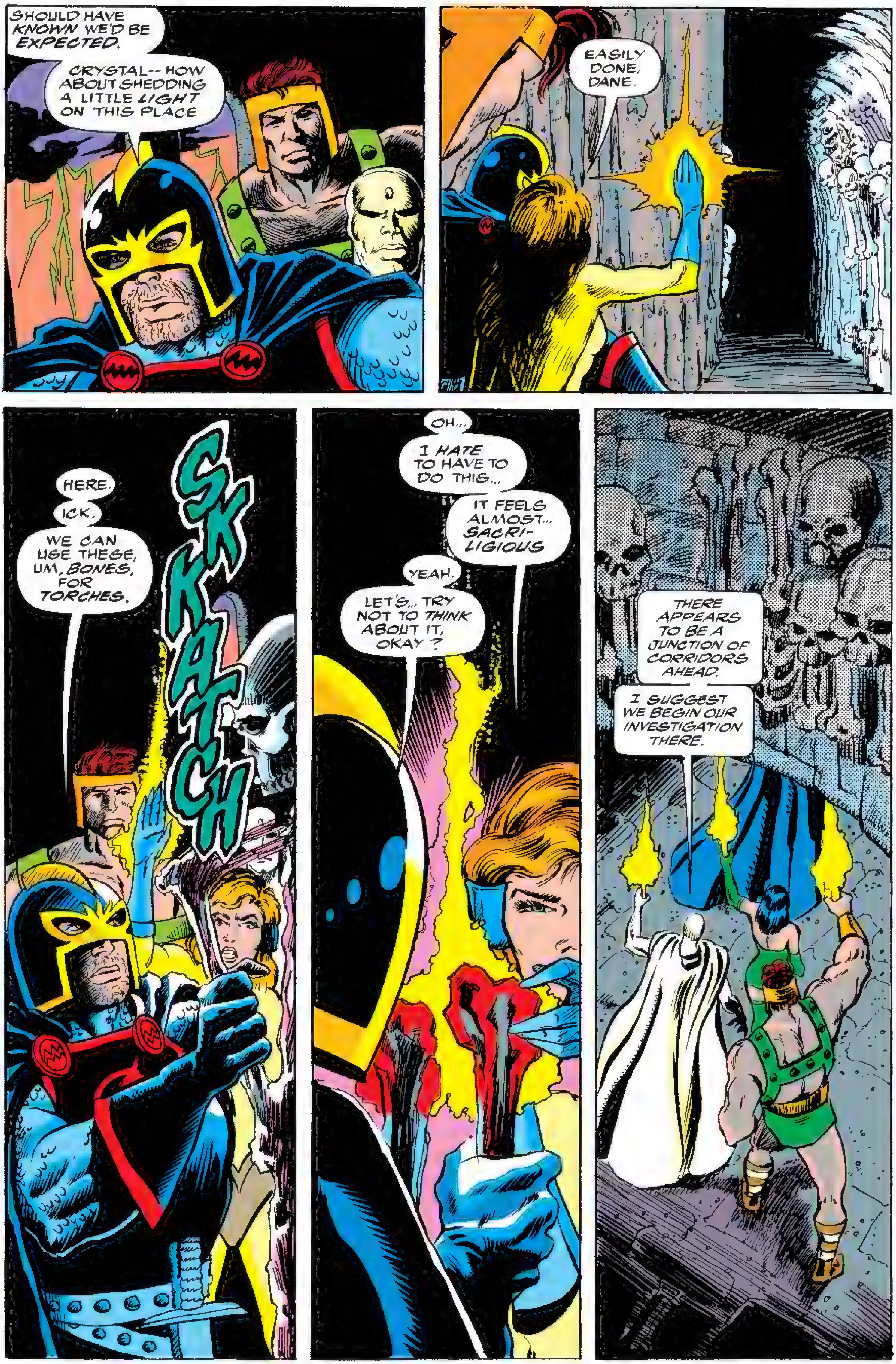

OH.
YEAH.
RIGHT.
HOURS OF MONOTONOUS TRUDGING LATER...
ALMOST... THERE...
SHOULD BE...
JUST OVER THE RIDGE...
FASCINATING.
TO SAY THE LEAST.
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT DO YOU SEE?
ZEUS'S BEARD...
GOOD LORD.
BY AGON...!

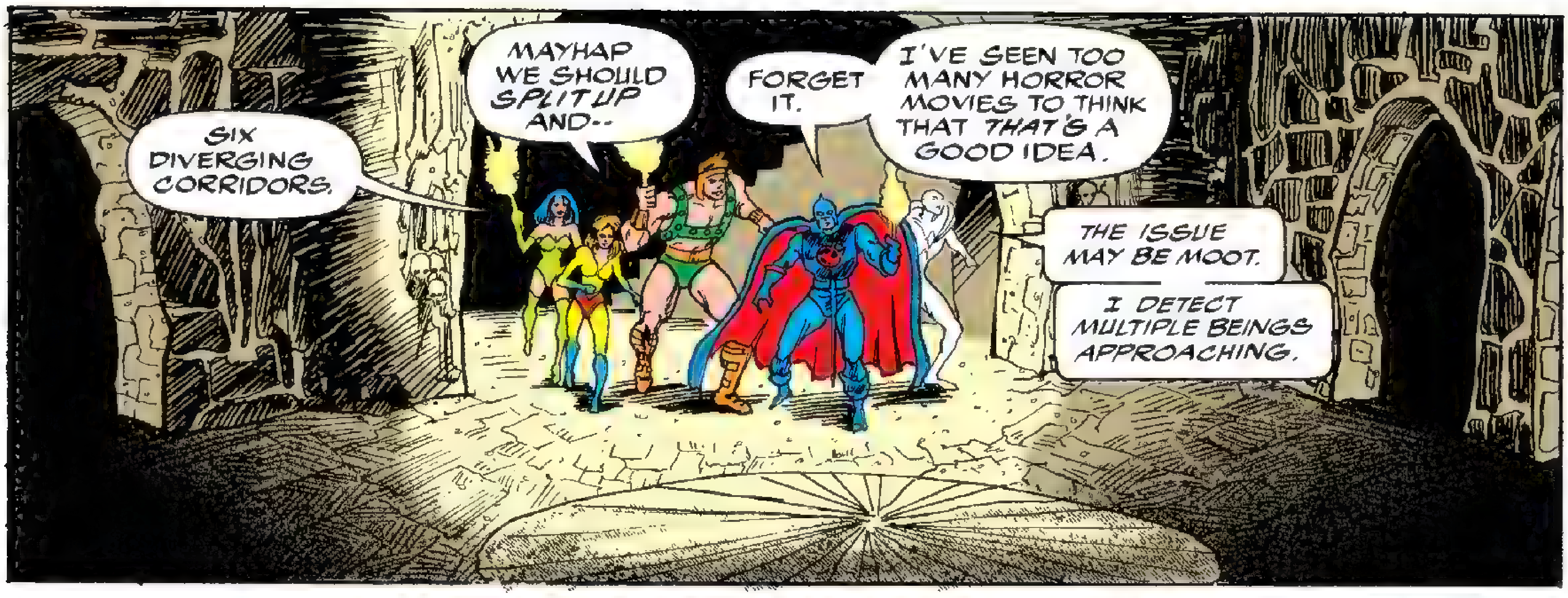

I BELIEVE WE HAVE LOCATED THE GRIM REAPER'S *PLACE OF RESIDENCE.*
I'D SAY THAT'S A PRETTY SAFE BET.

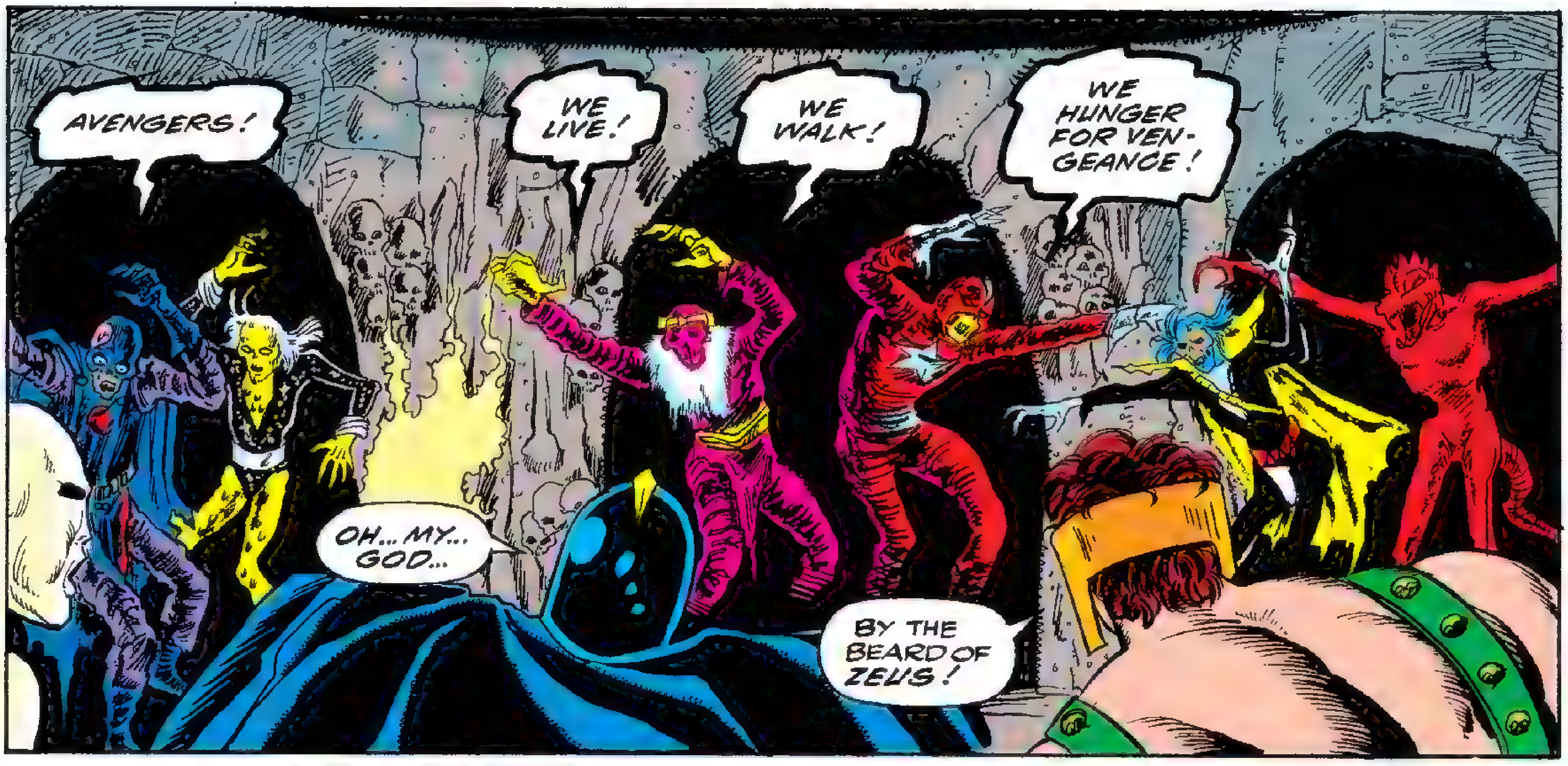

AT THAT MOMENT...
FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE, I *SUMMON* THEE!
RETURN NOW TO TASTE OF THE *VENGEANCE* YOU SO HUNGER FOR IN ETERNITY!
THIS, I *COMMAND!*
SKLUTCH
SKRAAATCH
YES!
YESSSS!
THEY *LIVE!*
RISE, FELLOW SERVANTS OF THE ABYSS!
YOU HAVE JOURNEYED LONG THROUGH THE COLD LANDS.
NO LONGER ARE YOU *BODYLESS SHADES*-- FROM THIS MOMENT FORWARD, YOU ARE--

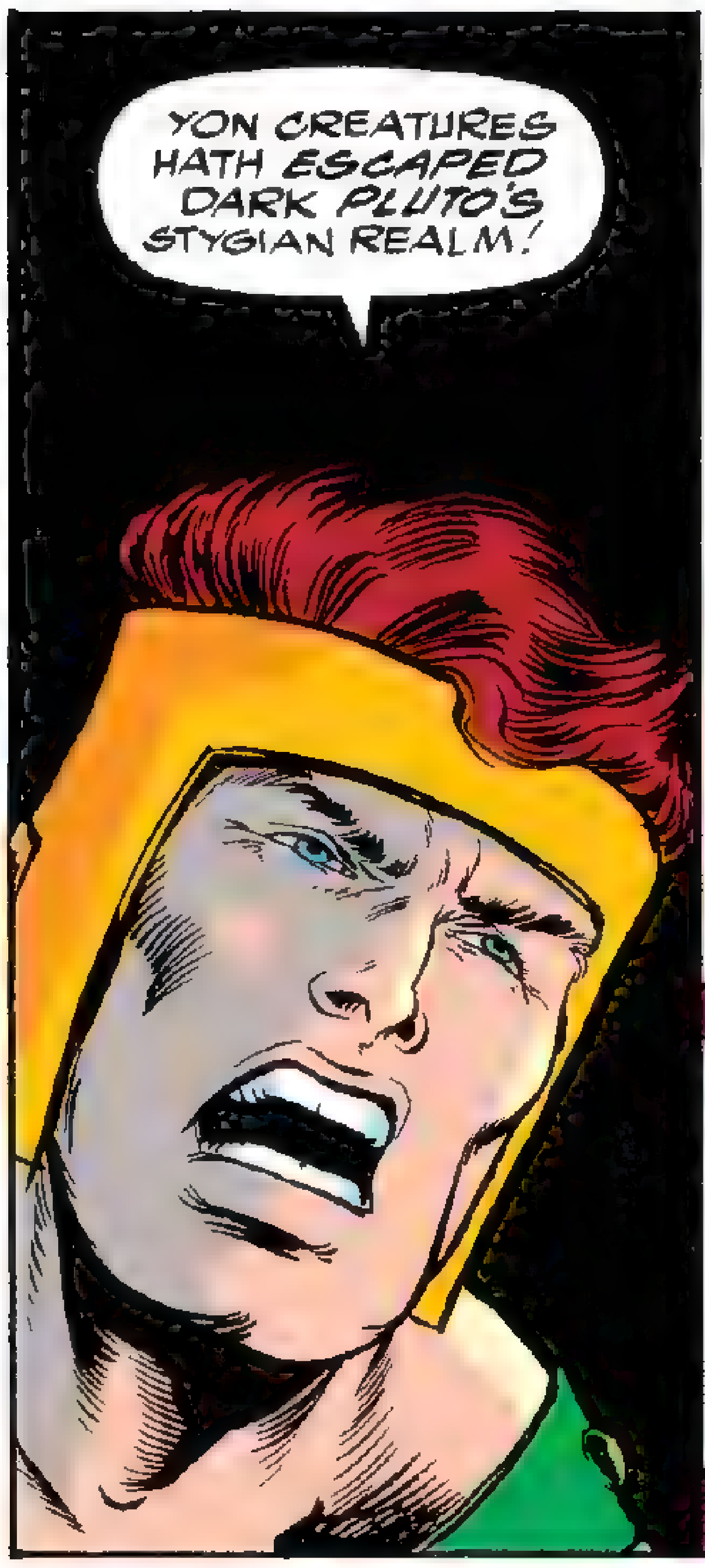

--THE LEGION OF THE UNLIVING!
BARON HEINRICH ZEMO--
--NATHAN GARRETT, THE ORIGINAL BLACK KNIGHT--
--ALEXI SHOSTAKOV, THE FIRST RED GUARDIAN--
--NEBULON, THE CELESTIAL MAN--
--THE VAMPIRE AMENHOTEP--
--JOSEPH CONROY, ALSO KNOWN AS INFERNO--
--COUNT LUCHINO NEFARIA--
--THE ALIEN STAR-STALKER--
--AND NECRODAMUS THE SORCERER.
EACH OF YOU PERISHED IN BATTLE, AS DID I--
--AT THE HANDS OF THE ACCURSED AVENGERS!
NOW, WE SHALL HAVE OUR VENGEANCE!

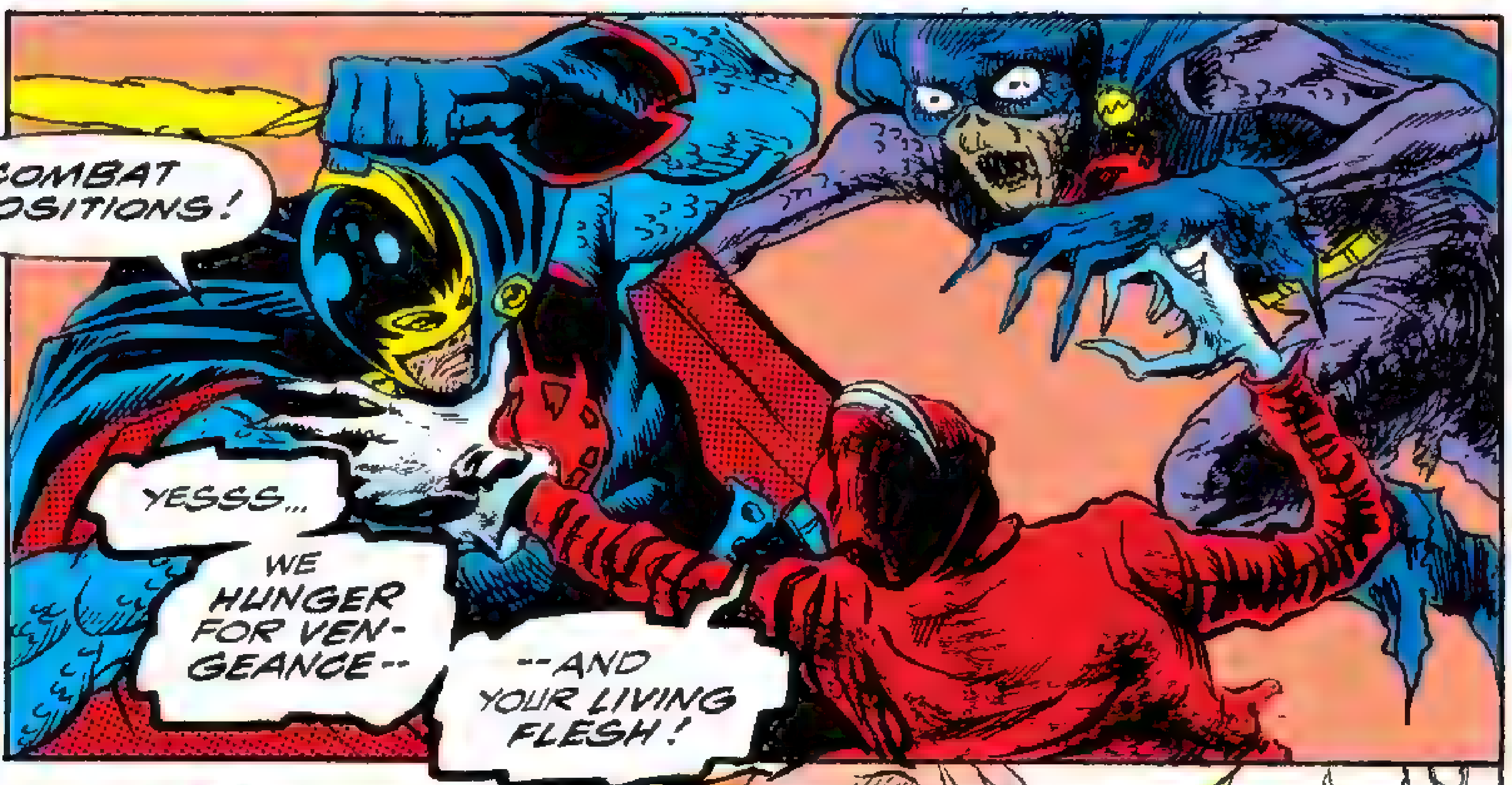

MEANWHILE...
I DO NOT CARE FOR YON CITADEL'S BAS-RELIEF.
ME NEITHER, HERC.
COME ON, AVENGERS.
LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.
EEEUUUCH.
THAT SMELL...
MY OLFACTORY SENSORS IDENTIFY IT AS THE CARBONIZED PARTICULATE MATTER--
KEERRKKK
--RESIDUE OF LIVING TISSUE WHICH HAS BEEN HEATED TO A TEMPERATURE OF AT LEAST--
YOU MEAN BURNT FLESH?!
AFFIRMATIVE.
KLANG
UH-OH...

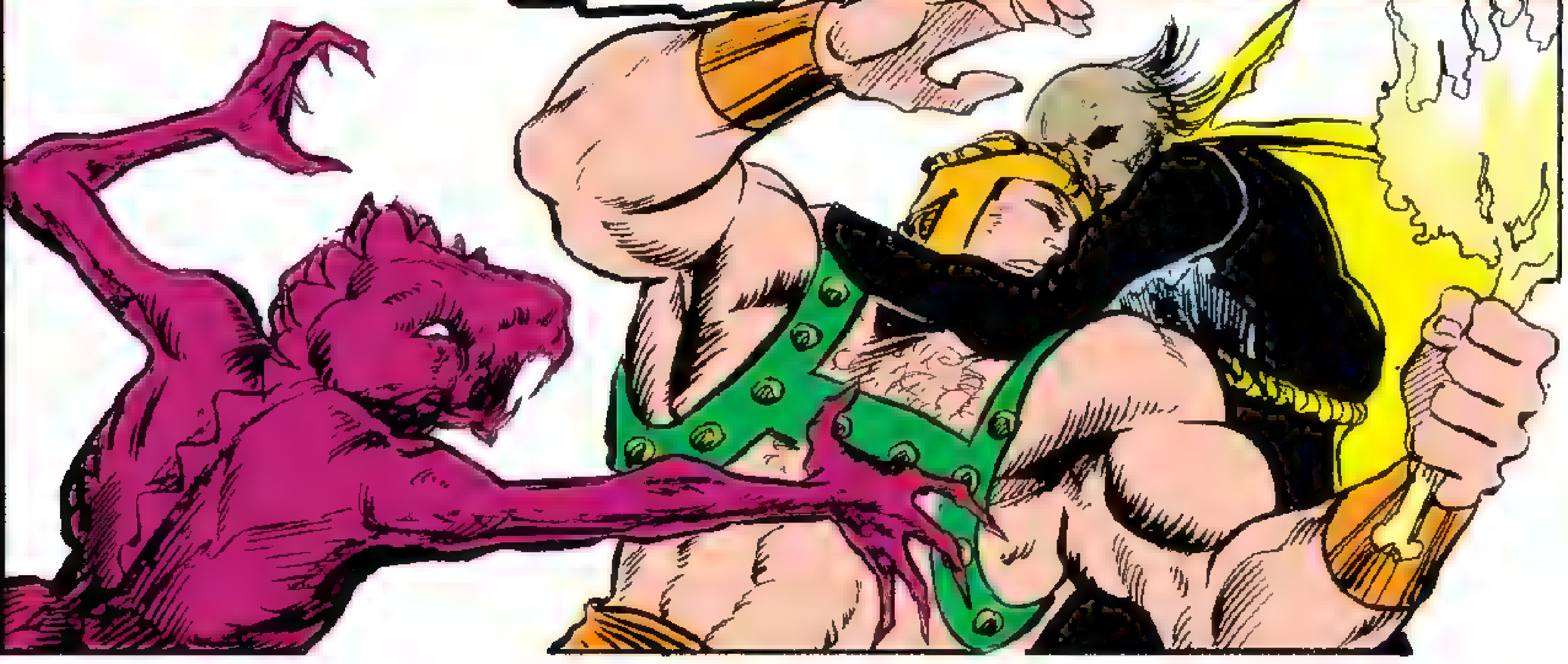

SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN* WE'D BE *EXPECTED*.
CRYSTAL-- HOW ABOUT SHEDDING A LITTLE *LIGHT* ON THIS PLACE
EASILY DONE, DANE.
HERE.
ICK.
WE CAN USE THESE, UM, *BONES*, FOR *TORCHES*.
SKKATCH
OH...
I *HATE* TO HAVE TO DO THIS...
IT FEELS ALMOST... *SACRILIGIOUS*
YEAH.
LET'S... TRY NOT TO *THINK* ABOUT IT, OKAY?
THERE APPEARS TO BE A JUNCTION OF CORRIDORS AHEAD.
I SUGGEST WE BEGIN OUR INVESTIGATION THERE.

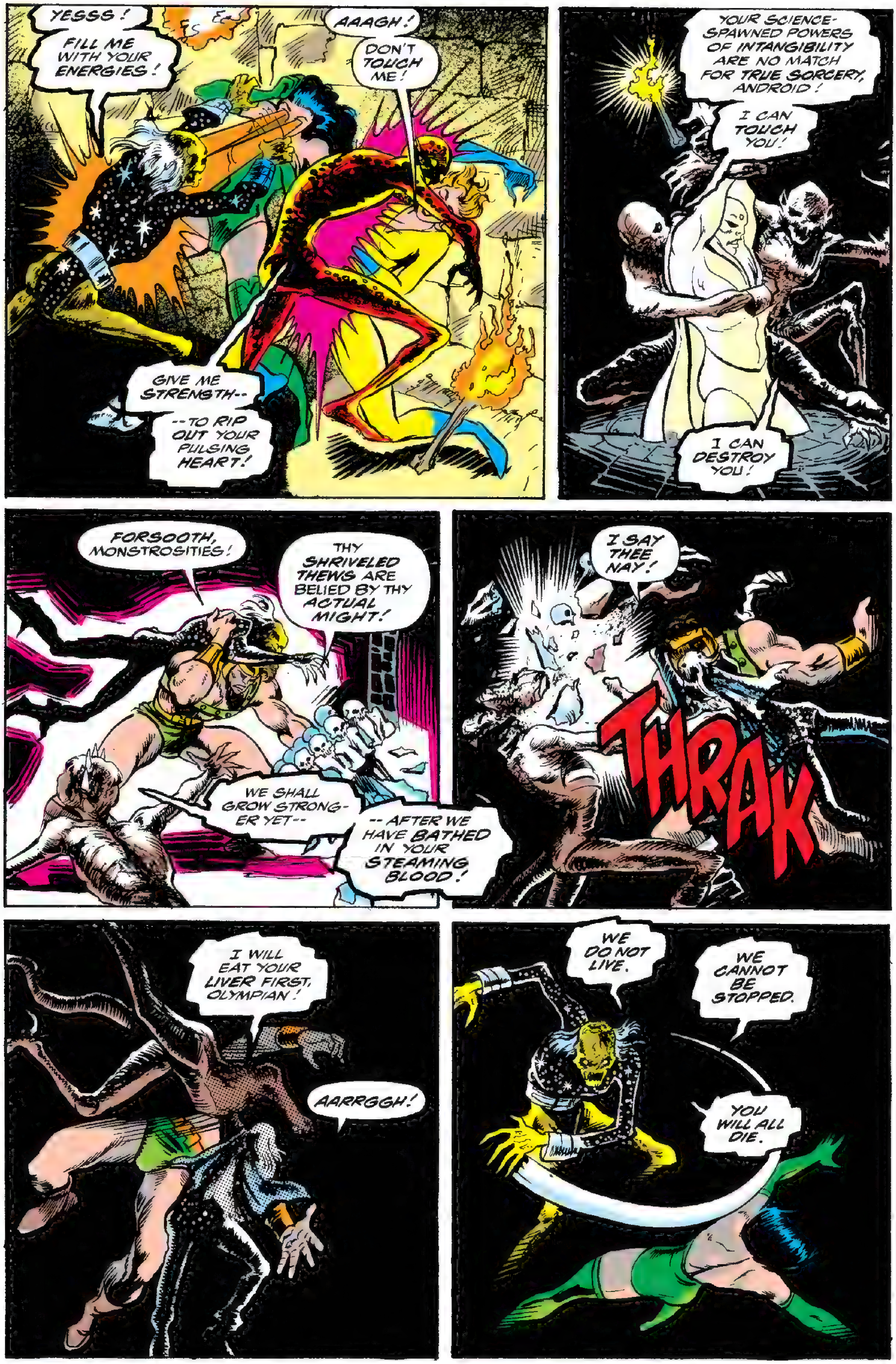

SIX DIVERGING CORRIDORS.
MAYHAP WE SHOULD *SPLIT UP* AND--
FORGET IT.
I'VE SEEN TOO MANY HORROR MOVIES TO THINK THAT *THAT'S* A GOOD IDEA.
THE ISSUE MAY BE MOOT.
I DETECT MULTIPLE BEINGS APPROACHING.

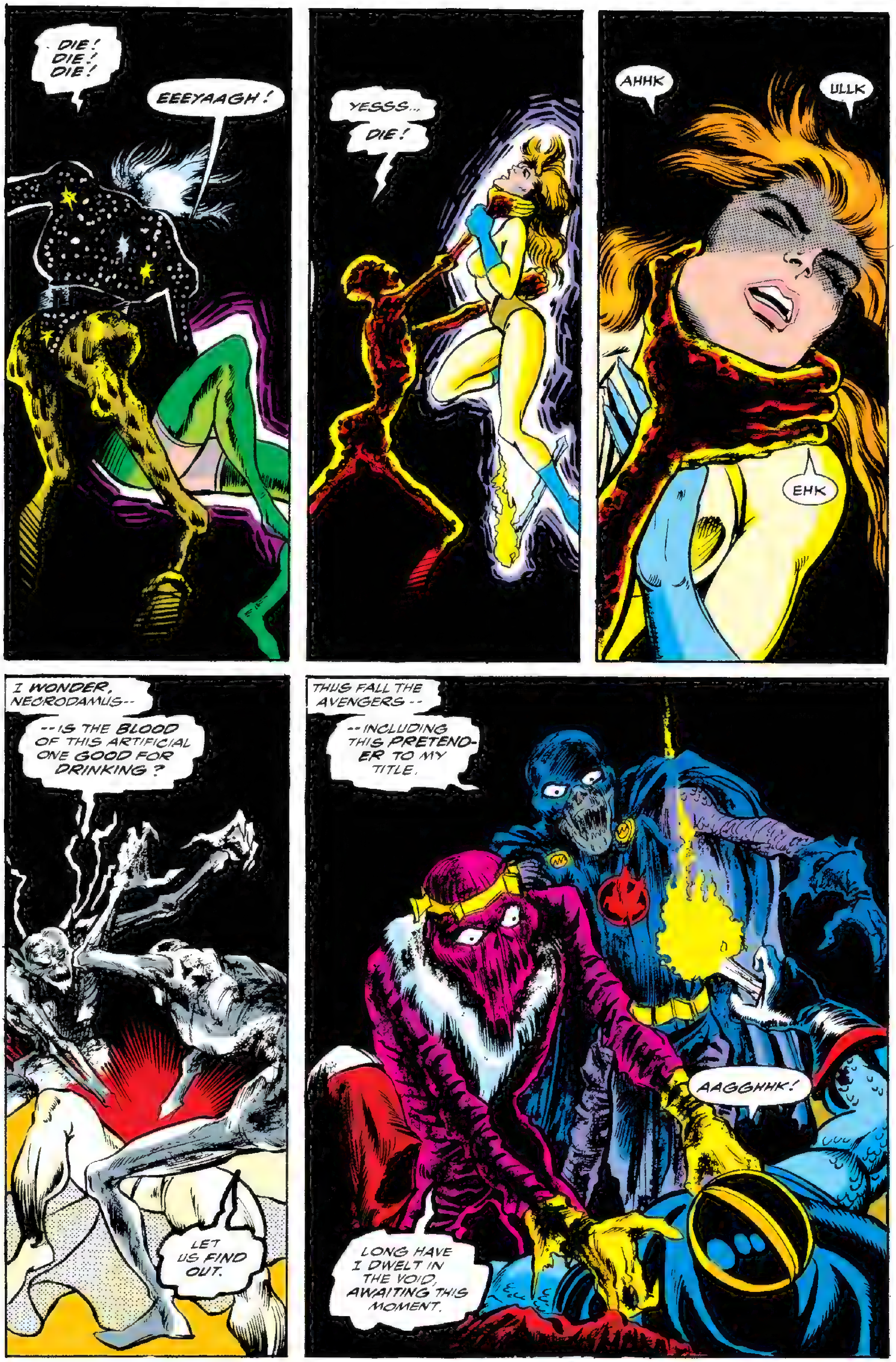

AVENGERS!
WE *LIVE!*
WE *WALK!*
WE *HUNGER* FOR VENGEANCE!
OH... MY... GOD...
BY THE BEARD OF *ZEUS!*

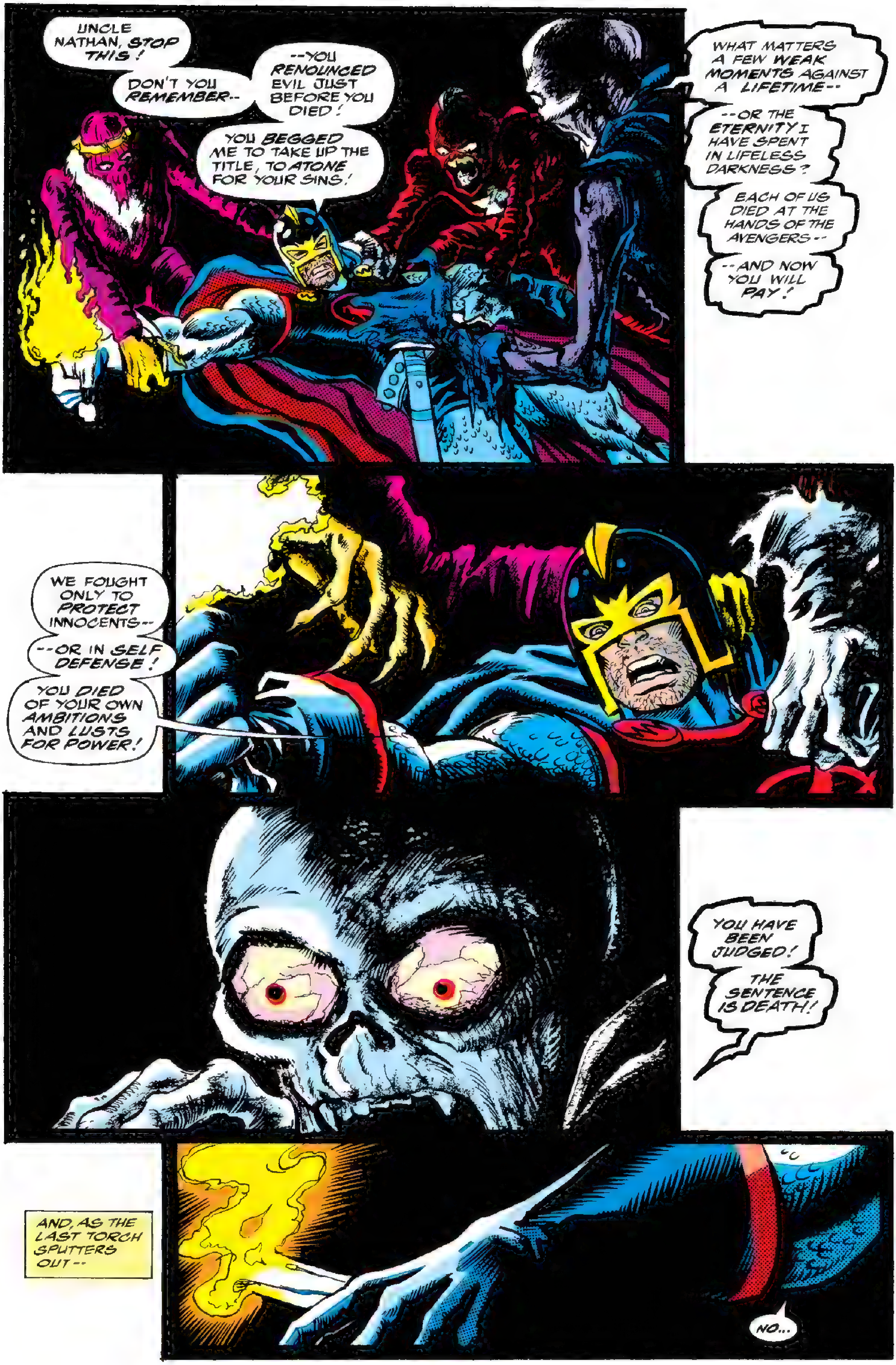

YON CREATURES HATH *ESCAPED* DARK *PLUTO'S* STYGIAN REALM!


COMBAT POSITIONS!
YESSS...
WE *HUNGER* FOR VENGEANCE--
--AND YOUR *LIVING FLESH!*

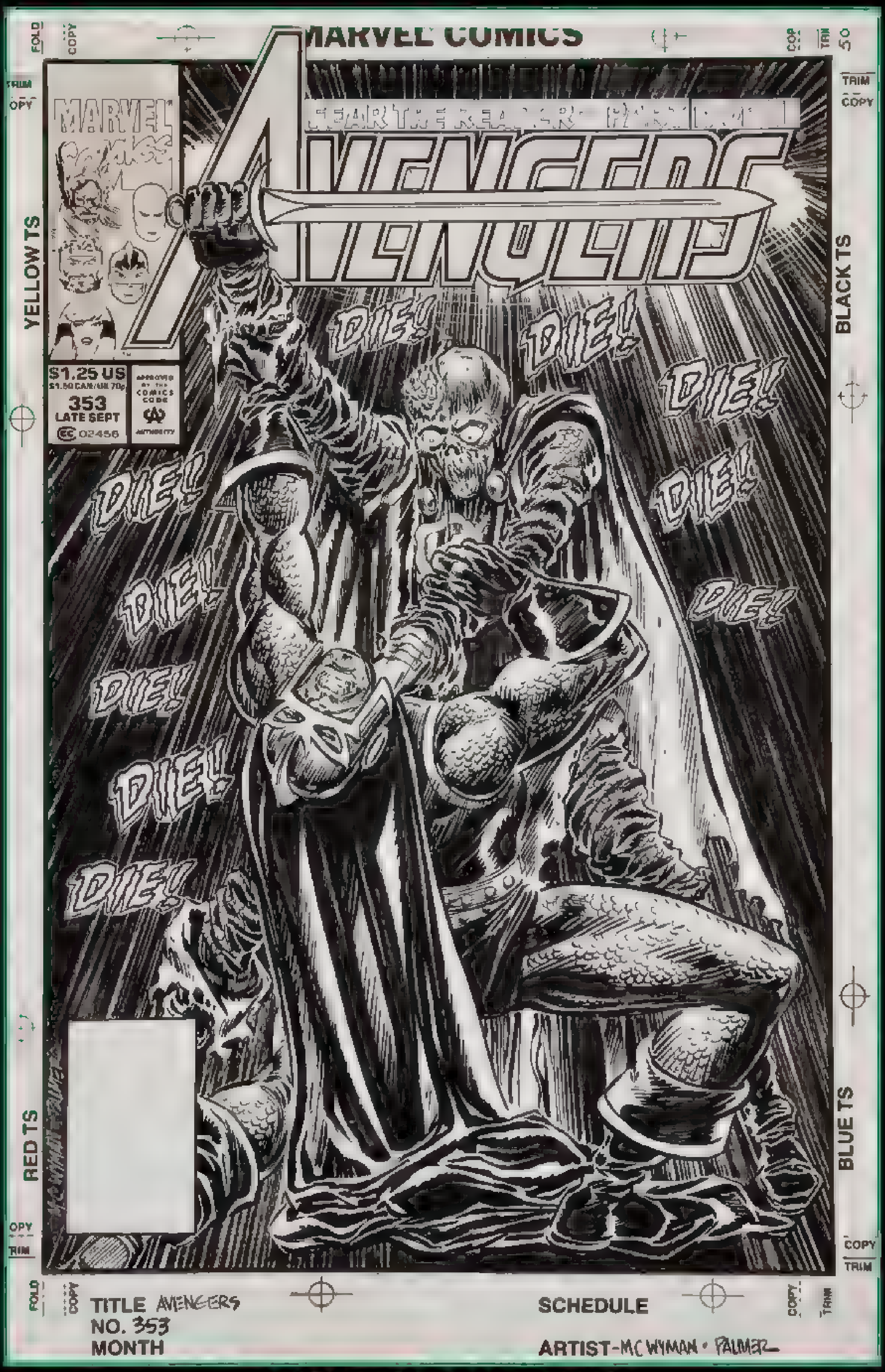



YESSS!
FILL ME WITH YOUR ENERGIES!
AAAGH!
DON'T TOUCH ME!
GIVE ME STRENGTH--
--TO RIP OUT YOUR PULSING HEART!
YOUR SCIENCE-SPAWNED POWERS OF INTANGIBILITY ARE NO MATCH FOR TRUE SORCERY, ANDROID!
I CAN TOUCH YOU!
I CAN DESTROY YOU!
FORSOOTH, MONSTROSITIES!
THY SHRIVELED THEWS ARE BELIED BY THY ACTUAL MIGHT!
WE SHALL GROW STRONGER YET--
--AFTER WE HAVE BATHED IN YOUR STEAMING BLOOD!
I SAY THEE NAY!
THRAK
I WILL EAT YOUR LIVER FIRST, OLYMPIAN!
AARRGGH!
WE DO NOT LIVE.
WE CANNOT BE STOPPED.
YOU WILL ALL DIE.

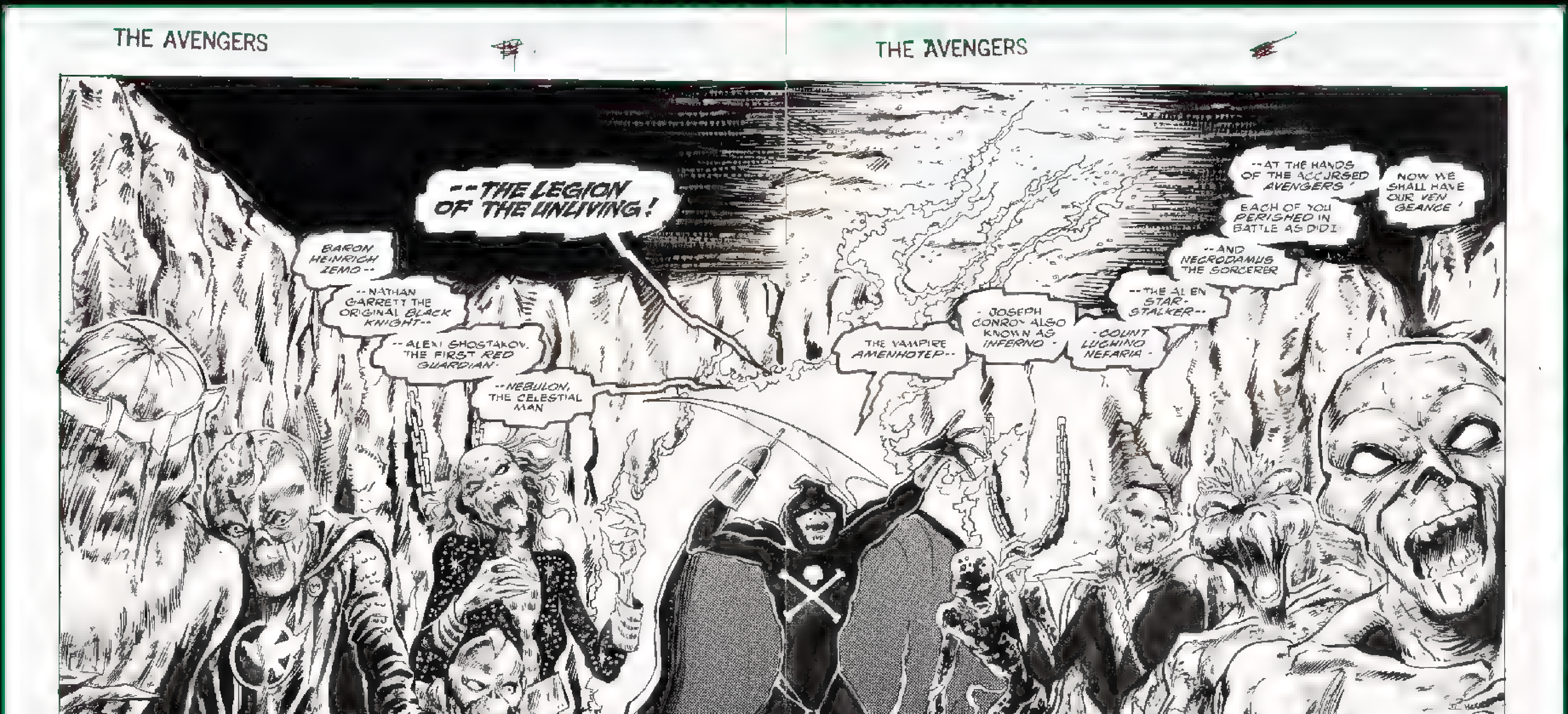

DIE! DIE! DIE!
EEEYAAGH!
YESSS... DIE!
AHHK
ULLK
EHK
I WONDER, NECRODAMUS--
--IS THE BLOOD OF THIS ARTIFICIAL ONE GOOD FOR DRINKING?
LET US FIND OUT.
THUS FALL THE AVENGERS--
--INCLUDING THIS PRETENDER TO MY TITLE.
AAGGHHK!
LONG HAVE I DWELT IN THE VOID, AWAITING THIS MOMENT.


UNCLE NATHAN, STOP THIS!
DON'T YOU REMEMBER--
--YOU RENOUNCED EVIL JUST BEFORE YOU DIED!
YOU BEGGED ME TO TAKE UP THE TITLE, TO ATONE FOR YOUR SINS!
WHAT MATTERS A FEW WEAK MOMENTS AGAINST A LIFETIME--
--OR THE ETERNITY I HAVE SPENT IN LIFELESS DARKNESS?
EACH OF US DIED AT THE HANDS OF THE AVENGERS--
--AND NOW YOU WILL PAY!
WE FOUGHT ONLY TO PROTECT INNOCENTS--
--OR IN SELF DEFENSE!
YOU DIED OF YOUR OWN AMBITIONS AND LUSTS FOR POWER!
YOU HAVE BEEN JUDGED!
THE SENTENCE IS DEATH!
AND, AS THE LAST TORCH SPUTTERS OUT--
NO...

-- DARKNESS DESCENDS ON EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES...
AVENGERS... ASSEMBLE.
NEXT ISSUE:
DEAD by DAWN


MARVEL COMICS
FEAR THE REAPER
AVENGERS
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
$1.25 US
353
LATE SEPT
YELLOW TS
BLACK TS
RED TS
BLUE TS
TITLE AVENGERS
NO. 353
MONTH
SCHEDULE
ARTIST-MC WYMAN • PALMER

AVENGERS #353 COVER
ART BY M.C. WYMAN & TOM PALMER

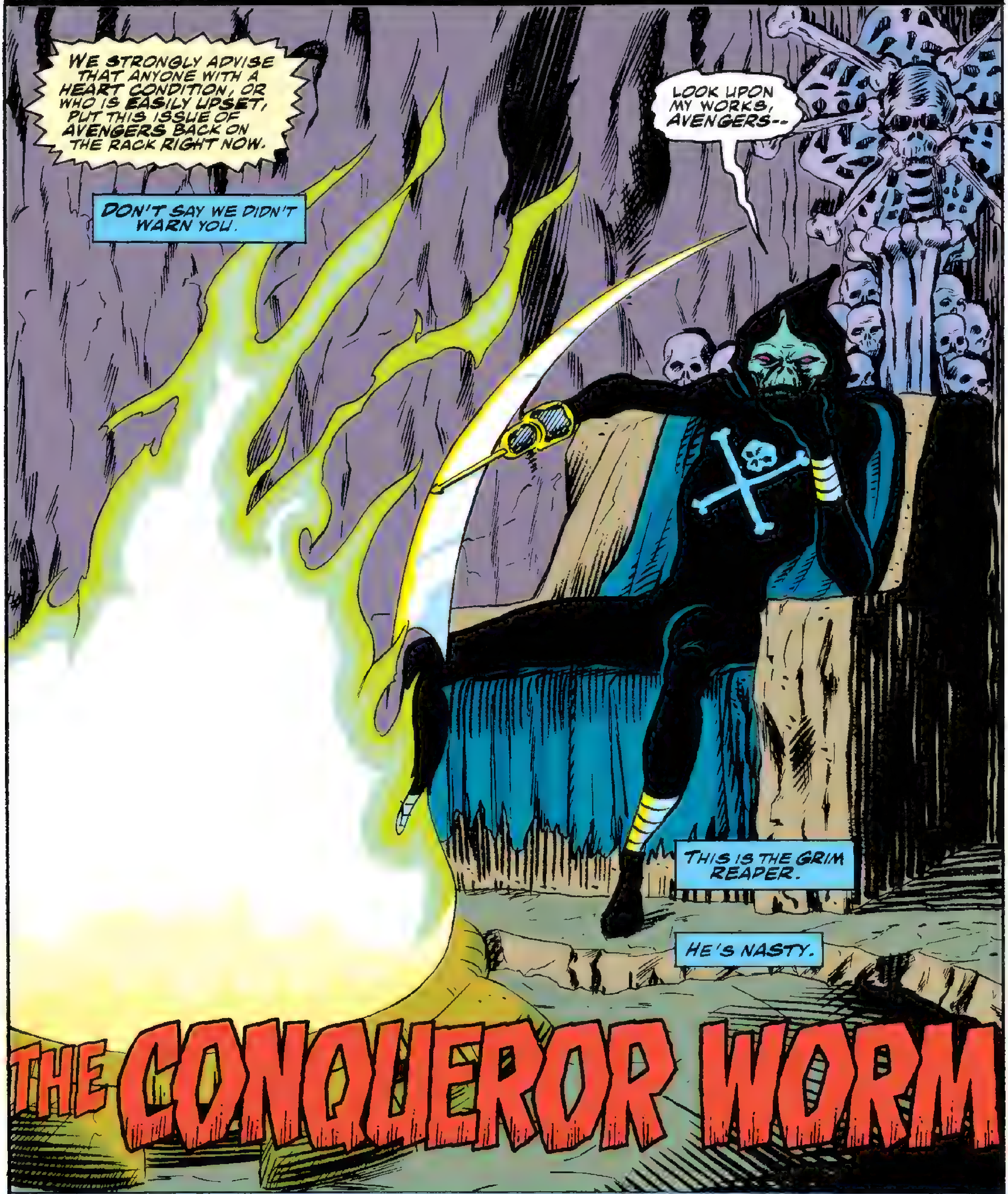

THE AVENGERS
THE AVENGERS
--THE LEGION OF THE UNLIVING!
BARON HEINRICH ZEMO--
--NATHAN GARRETT THE ORIGINAL BLACK KNIGHT--
--ALEXI GHOSTAKOV, THE FIRST RED GUARDIAN-
--NEBULON, THE CELESTIAL MAN
THE VAMPIRE AMENHOTEP--
-JOSEPH CONROY ALSO KNOWN AS INFERNO-
-COUNT LUCHINO NEFARIA-
--THE ALIEN STAR-STALKER--
--AND NECRODAMUS THE SORCERER
EACH OF YOU PERISHED IN BATTLE AS DID I-
--AT THE HANDS OF THE ACCURSED AVENGERS!
NOW WE SHALL HAVE OUR VENGEANCE!
20
21

AVENGERS #353, PAGES 14-15
ART BY M.C. WYMAN & ARIANE LENSHOEK
COURTESY OF HERITAGEAUCTIONS.COM

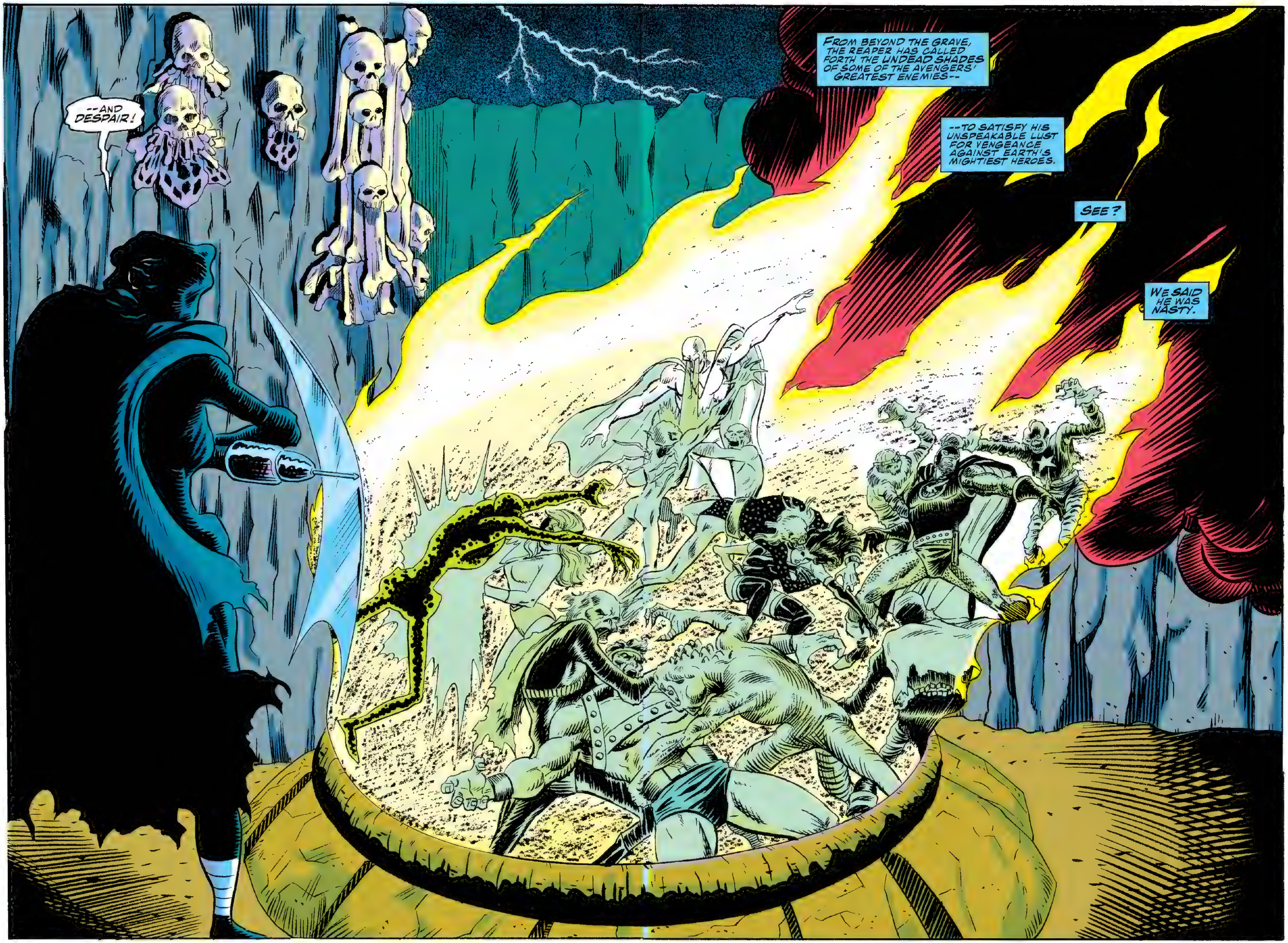
MARVEL COMICS®
FEAR THE REAPER -- PART III OF III
AVENGERS®
© 1992 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN / UK 70p
354
EARLY OCT
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
WELCOME TO OUR FEAST OF... DEATH!
M.C. WYMAN / T. PALMER

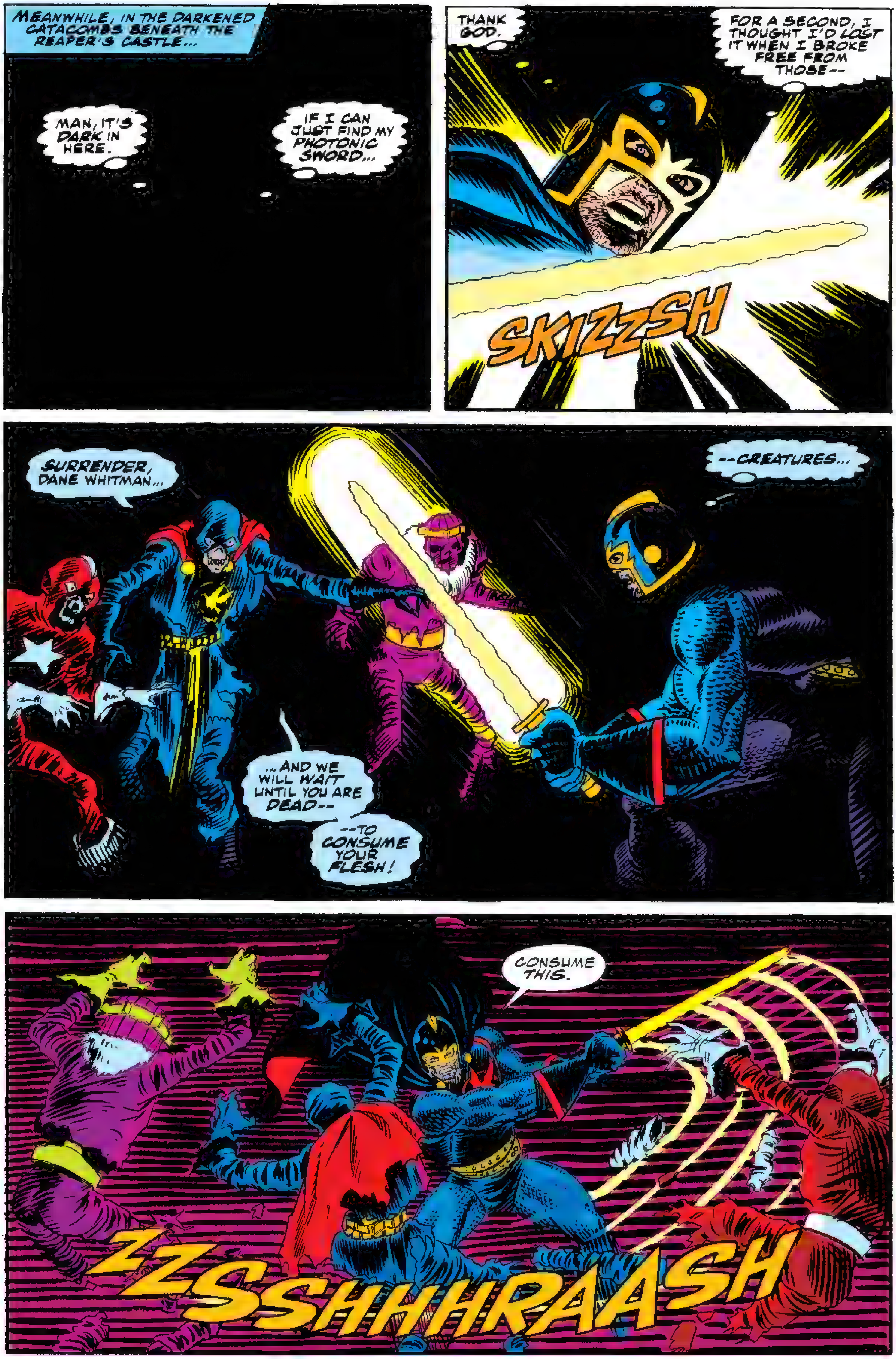
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

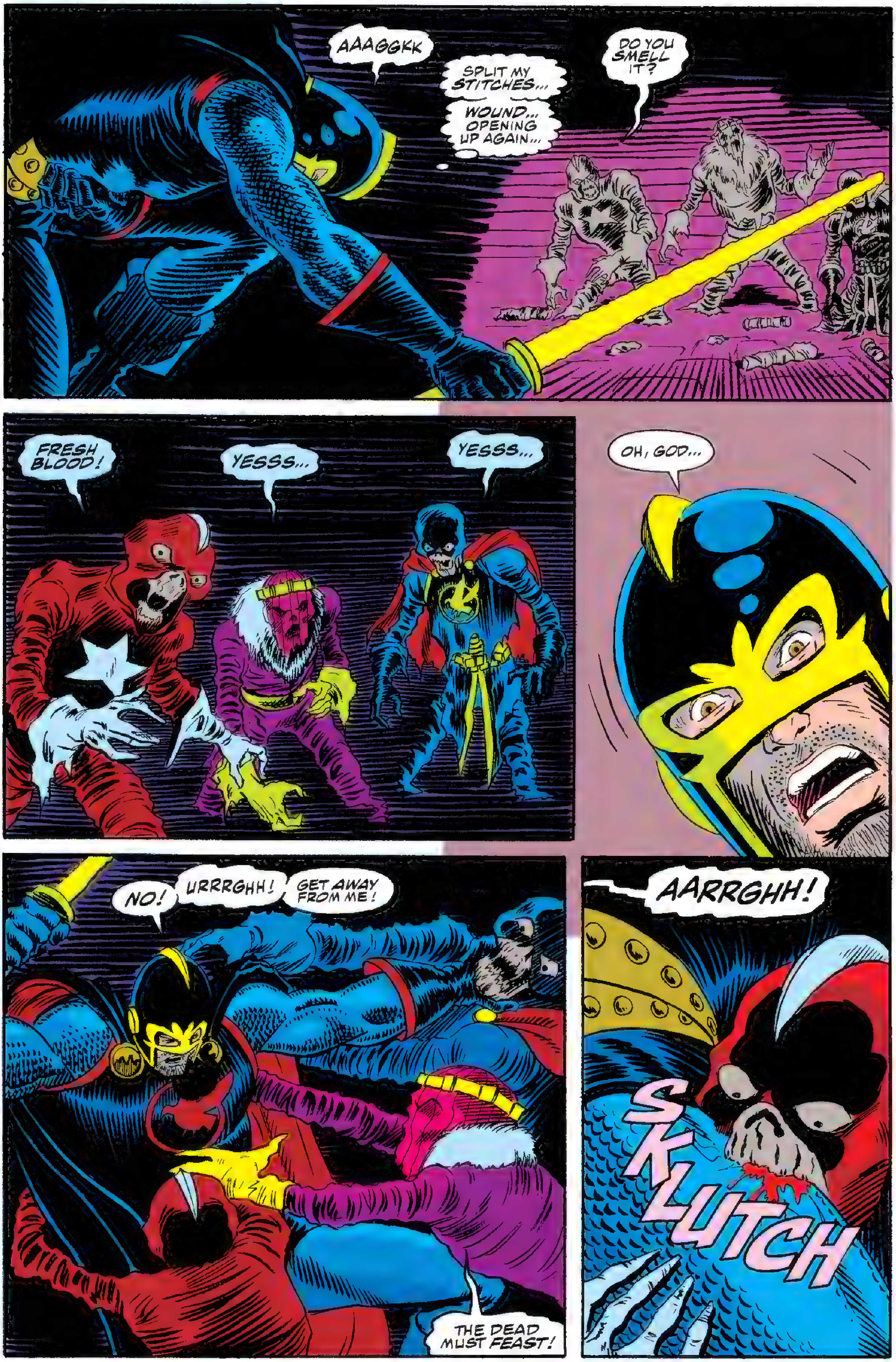
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

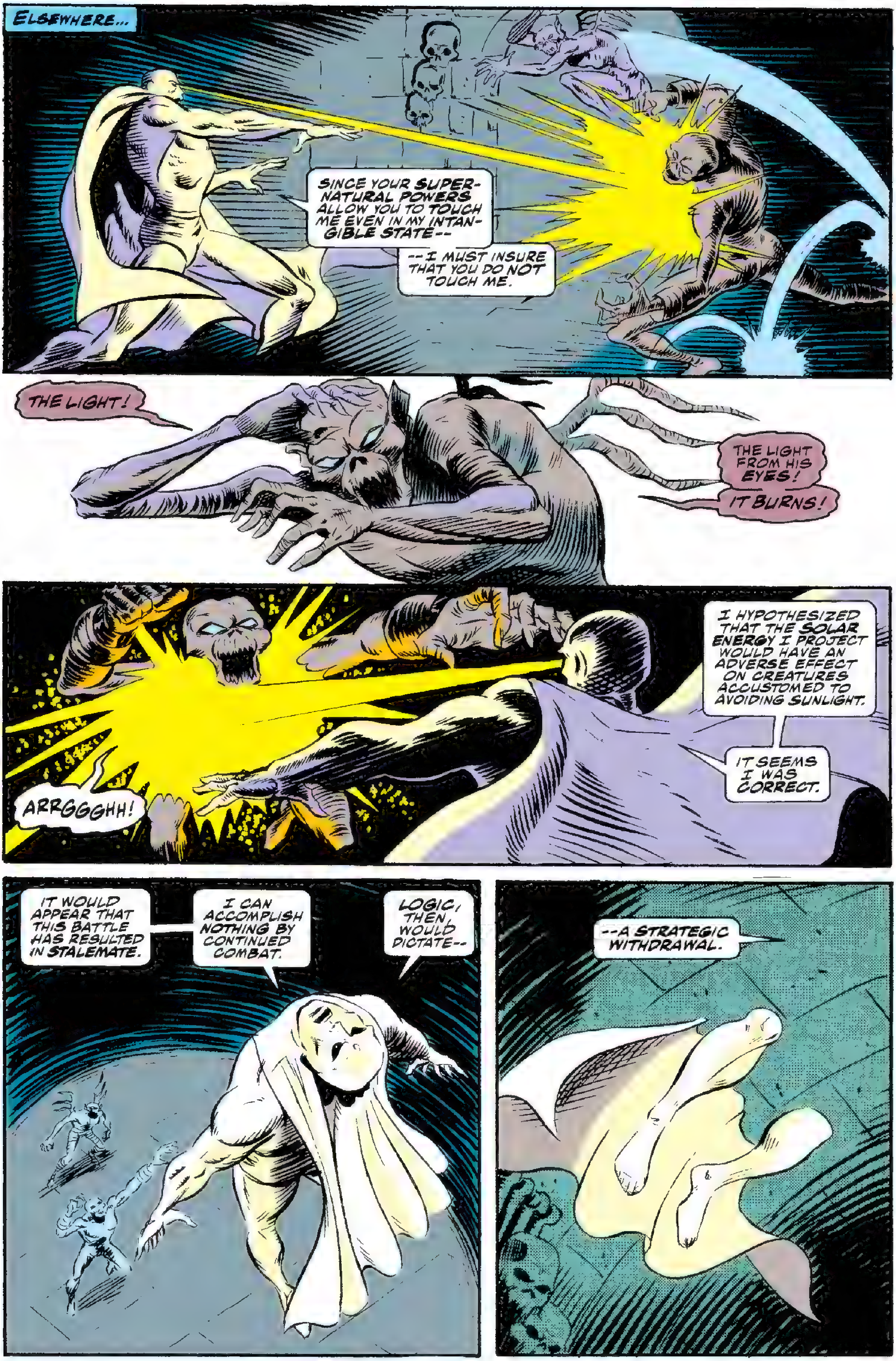

WE STRONGLY ADVISE THAT ANYONE WITH A HEART CONDITION, OR WHO IS EASILY UPSET, PUT THIS ISSUE OF AVENGERS BACK ON THE RACK RIGHT NOW.
DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU.
LOOK UPON MY WORKS, AVENGERS--
THIS IS THE GRIM REAPER.
HE'S NASTY.
THE CONQUEROR WORM

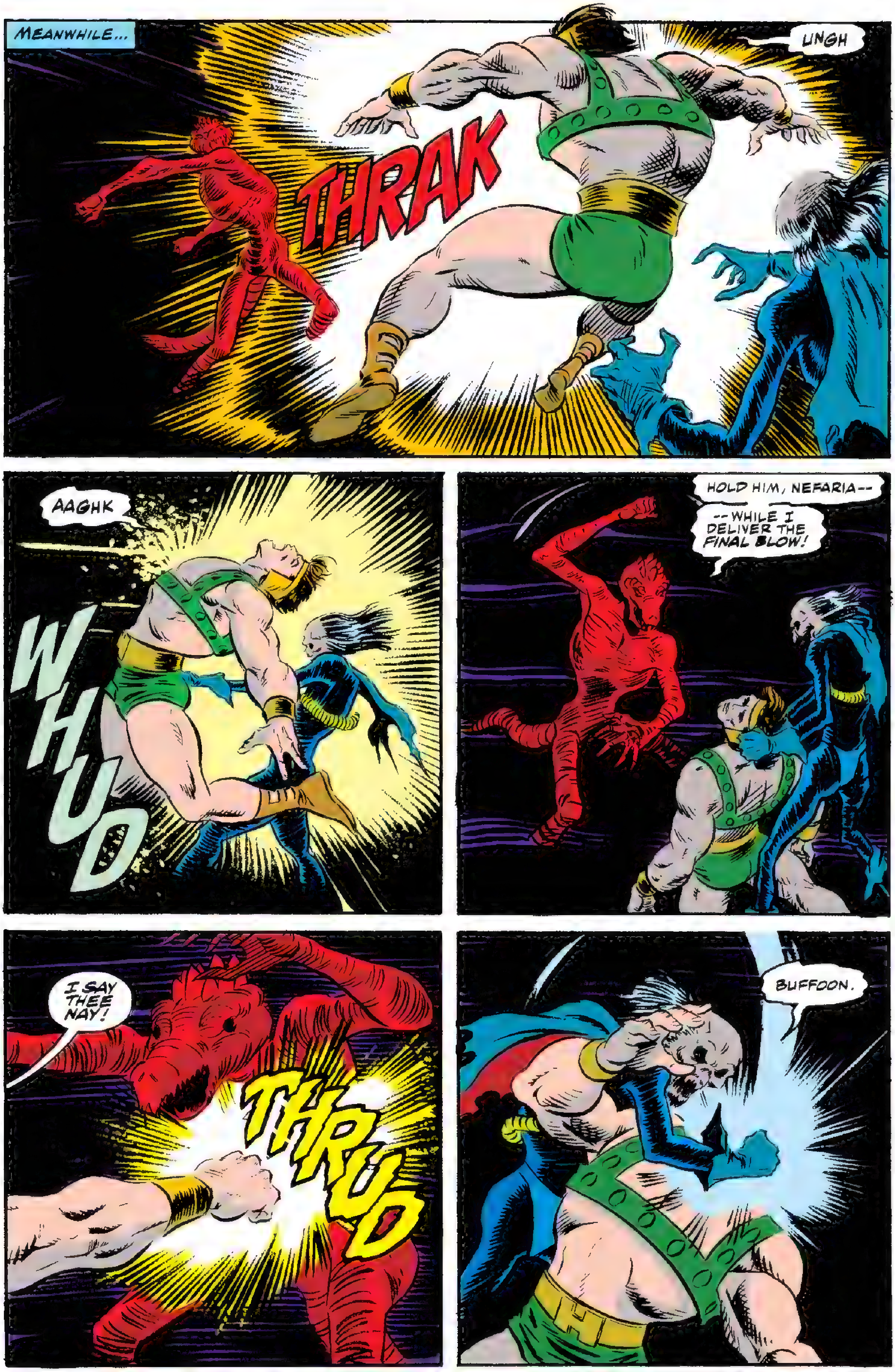
LEN KAMINSKI WRITER • M. C. WYMAN PENCILER • ALEXANDROV & ARIANE INKERS • BILL OAKLEY LETTERER • MIKE THOMAS COLORIST • RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR • TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

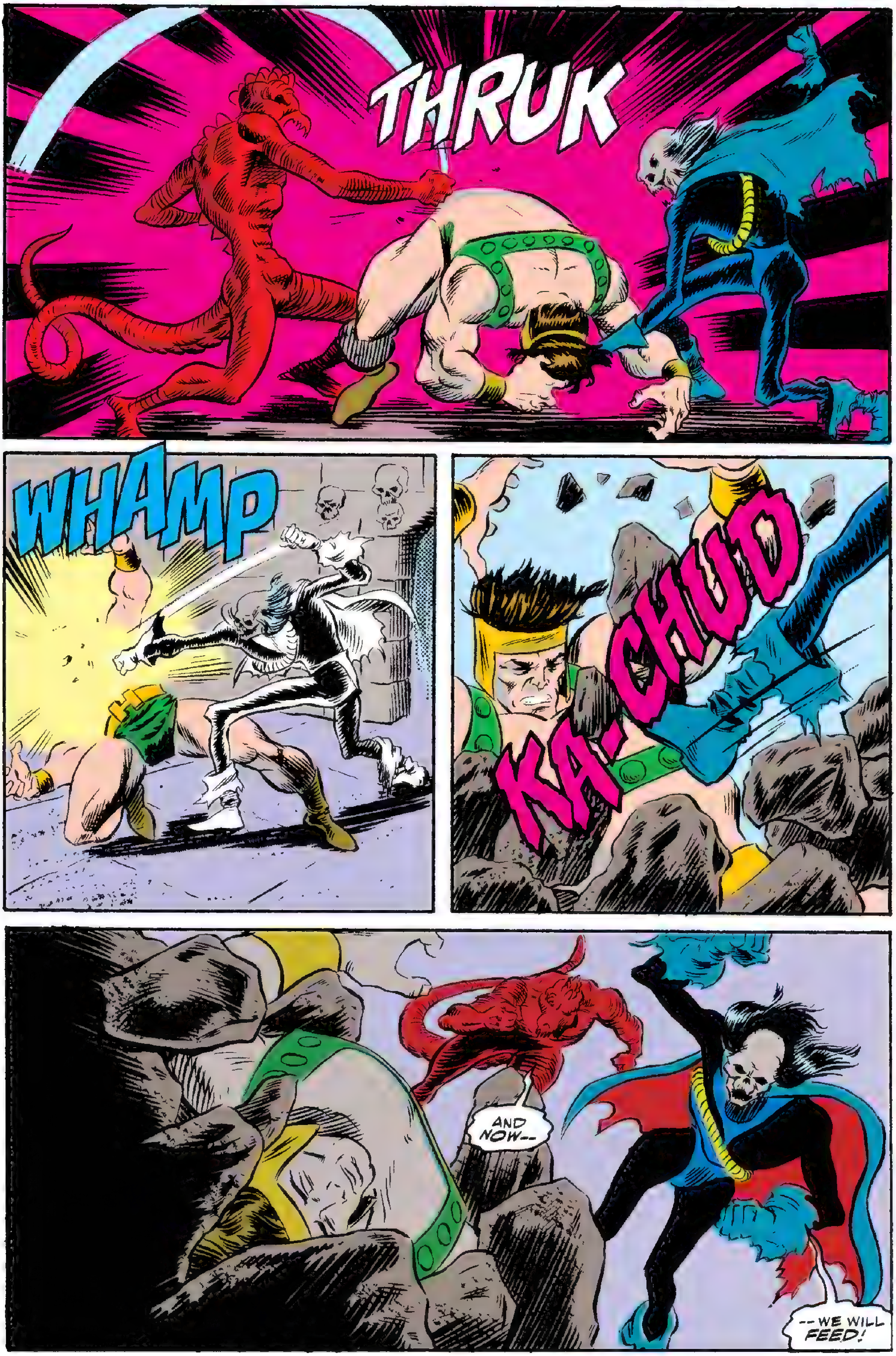

--AND DESPAIR!
FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE, THE REAPER HAS CALLED FORTH THE UNDEAD SHADES OF SOME OF THE AVENGERS' GREATEST ENEMIES--
--TO SATISFY HIS UNSPEAKABLE LUST FOR VENGEANCE AGAINST EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES.
SEE?
WE SAID HE WAS NASTY.

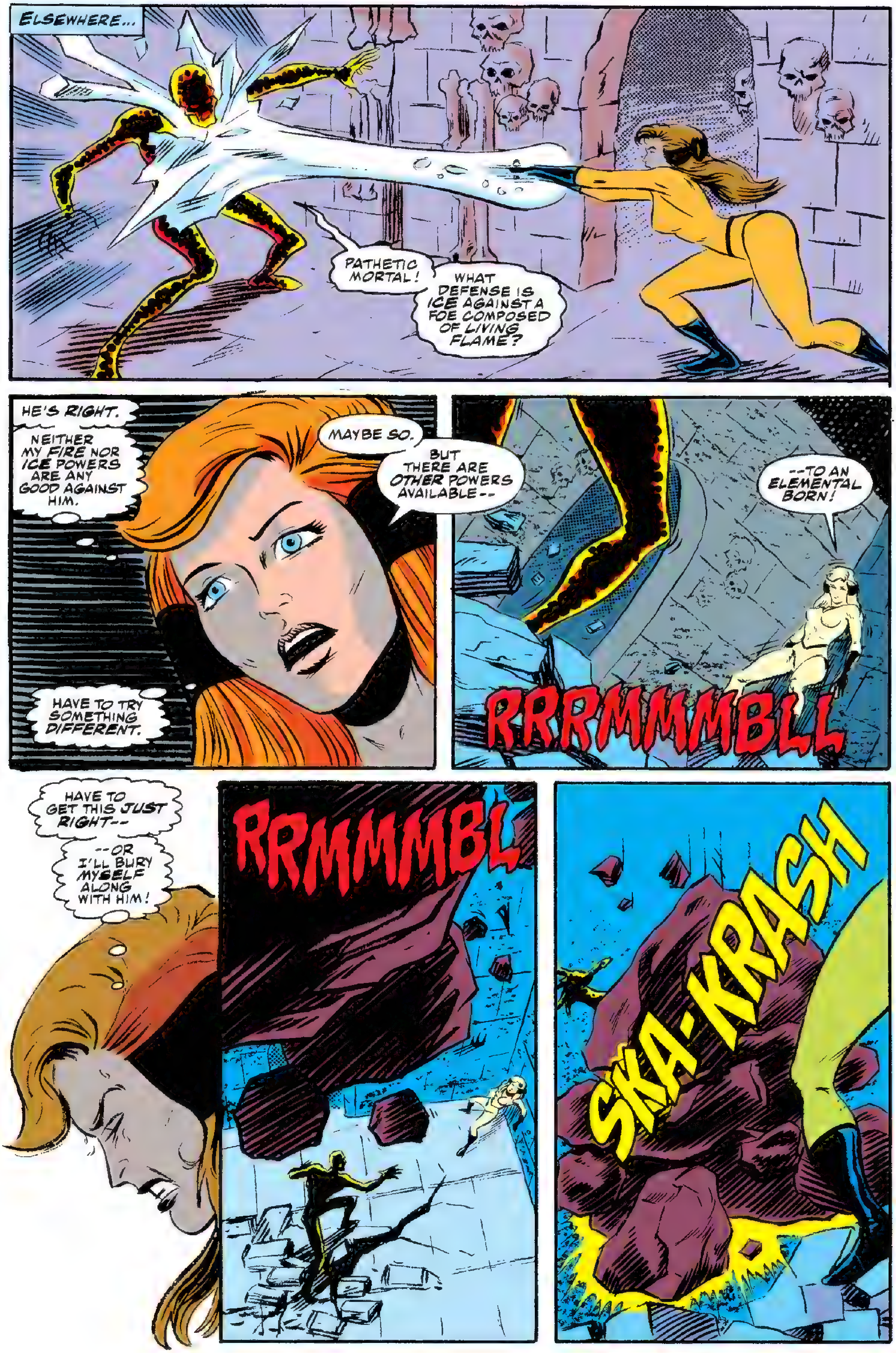

MEANWHILE, IN THE DARKENED CATACOMBS BENEATH THE REAPER'S CASTLE...
MAN, IT'S DARK IN HERE.
IF I CAN JUST FIND MY PHOTONIC SWORD...
THANK GOD.
FOR A SECOND, I THOUGHT I'D LOST IT WHEN I BROKE FREE FROM THOSE--
SKIZZSH
SURRENDER, DANE WHITMAN...
--CREATURES...
...AND WE WILL WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE DEAD--
--TO CONSUME YOUR FLESH!
CONSUME THIS.
ZZSSHHHRAASH

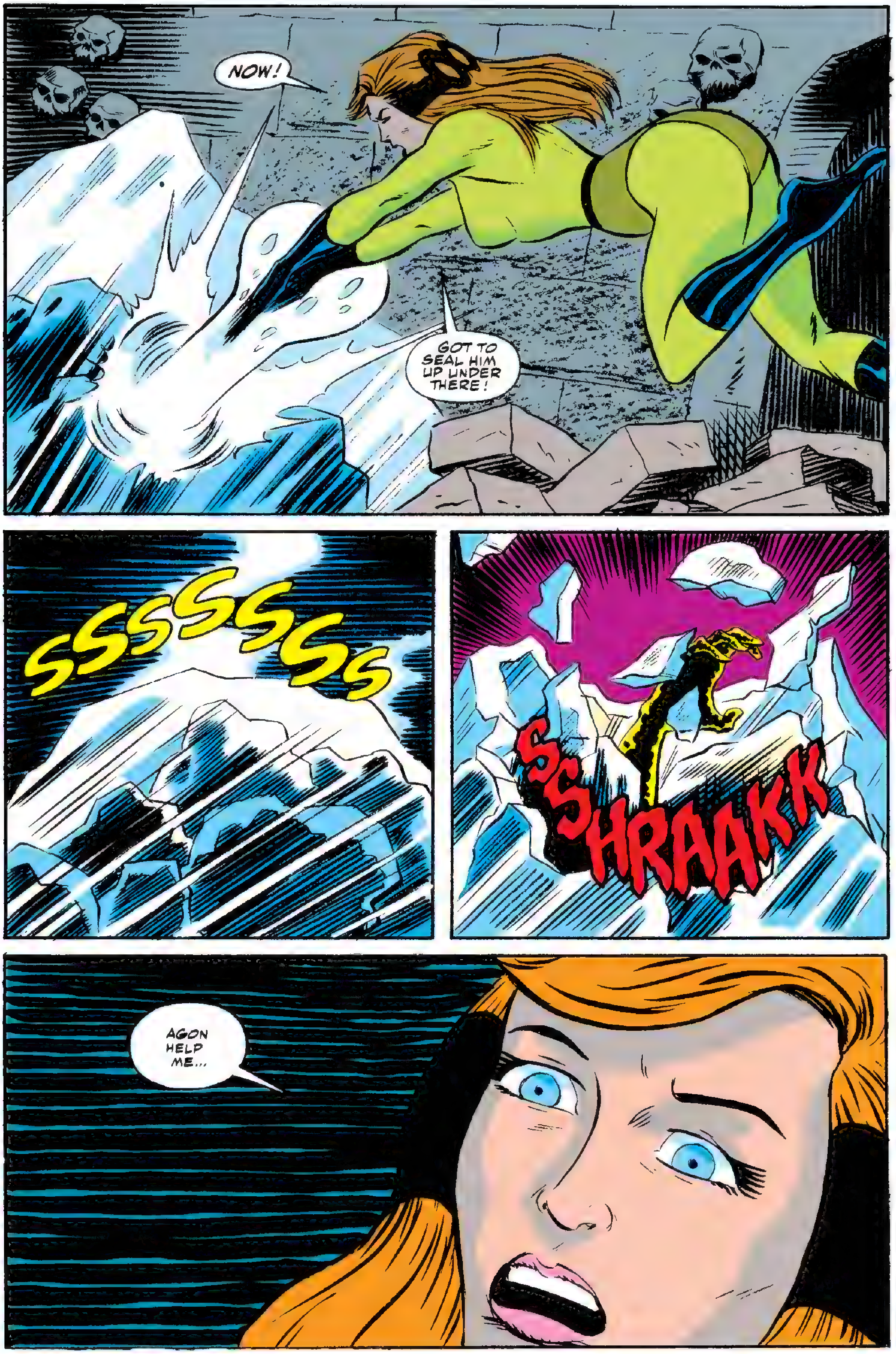

AAAGGKK
SPLIT MY STITCHES...
WOUND... OPENING UP AGAIN...
DO YOU SMELL IT?
FRESH BLOOD!
YESSS...
YESSS...
OH, GOD...
NO!
URRRGHH!
GET AWAY FROM ME!
THE DEAD MUST FEAST!
AARRGHH!
SKLUTCH

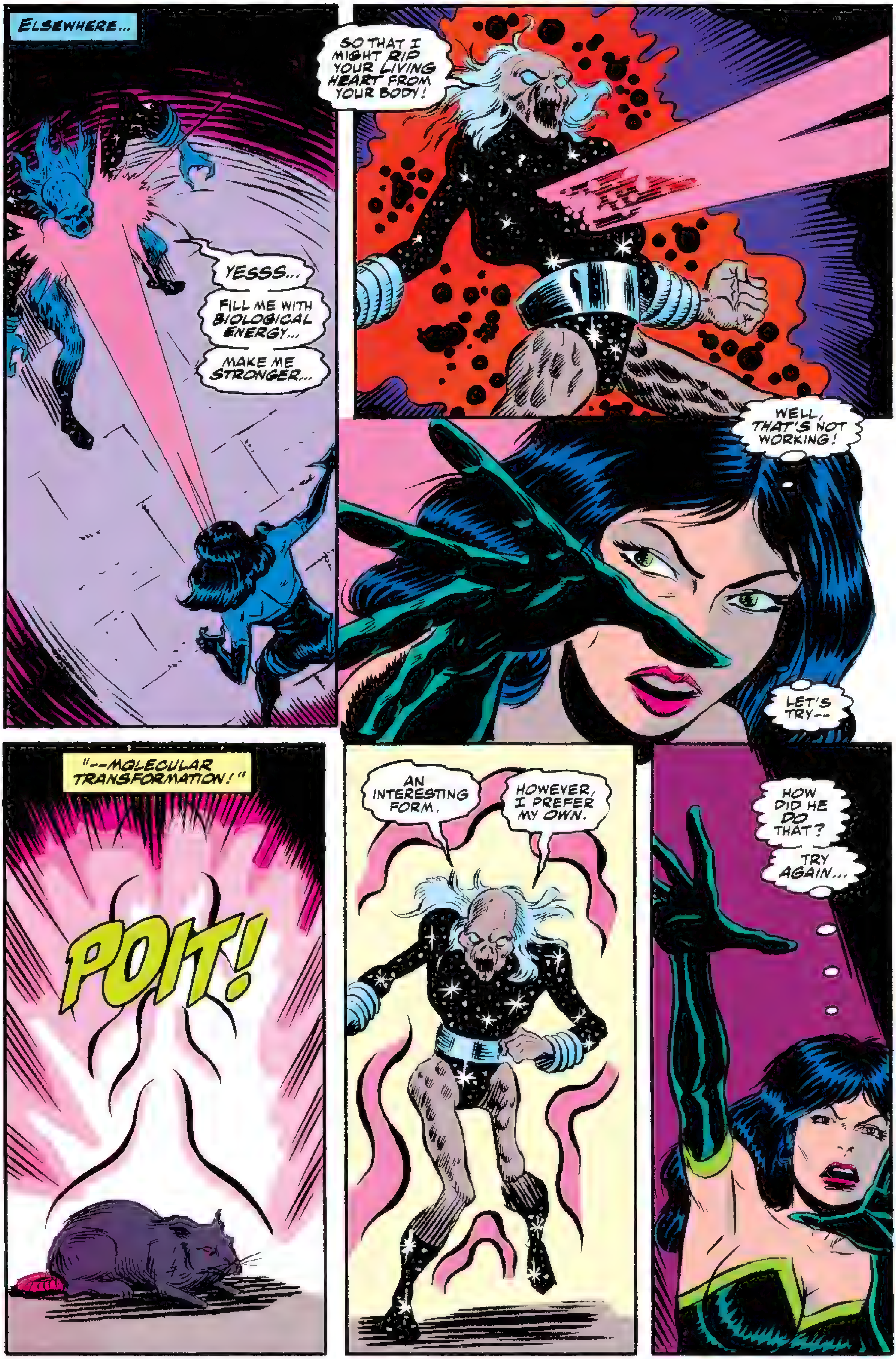

ELSEWHERE...
SINCE YOUR SUPERNATURAL POWERS ALLOW YOU TO TOUCH ME EVEN IN MY INTANGIBLE STATE--
--I MUST INSURE THAT YOU DO NOT TOUCH ME.
THE LIGHT!
THE LIGHT FROM HIS EYES!
IT BURNS!
I HYPOTHESIZED THAT THE SOLAR ENERGY I PROJECT WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON CREATURES ACCUSTOMED TO AVOIDING SUNLIGHT.
IT SEEMS I WAS CORRECT.
ARRGGGHH!
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THIS BATTLE HAS RESULTED IN STALEMATE.
I CAN ACCOMPLISH NOTHING BY CONTINUED COMBAT.
LOGIC, THEN, WOULD DICTATE--
--A STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL.


MEANWHILE...
THRAK
UNGH
AAGHK
WHUD
HOLD HIM, NEFARIA--
--WHILE I DELIVER THE FINAL BLOW!
I SAY THEE NAY!
THRUD
BUFFOON.

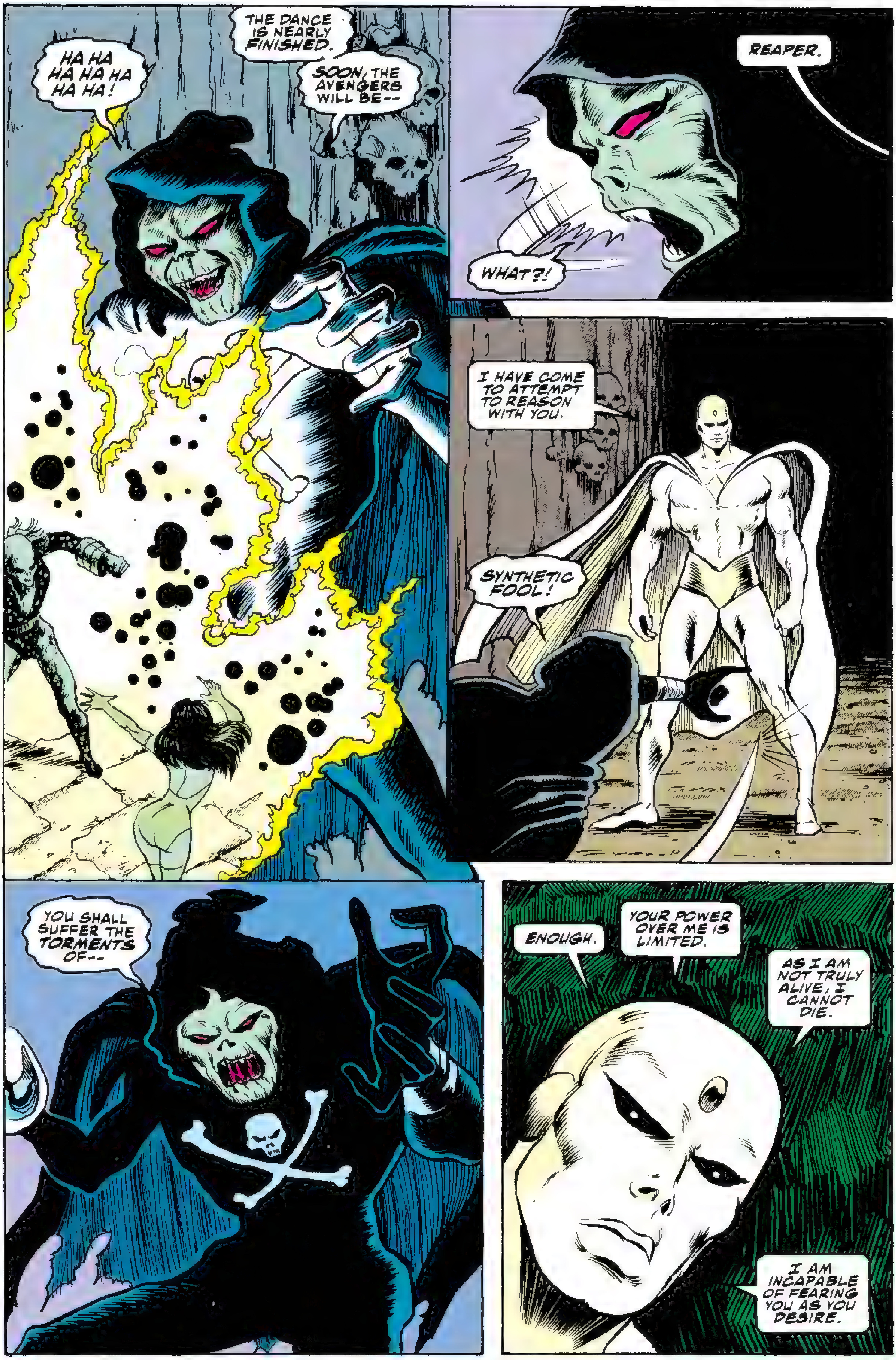

THRUK
WHAMP
KA-CHUD
AND NOW--
--WE WILL FEED!

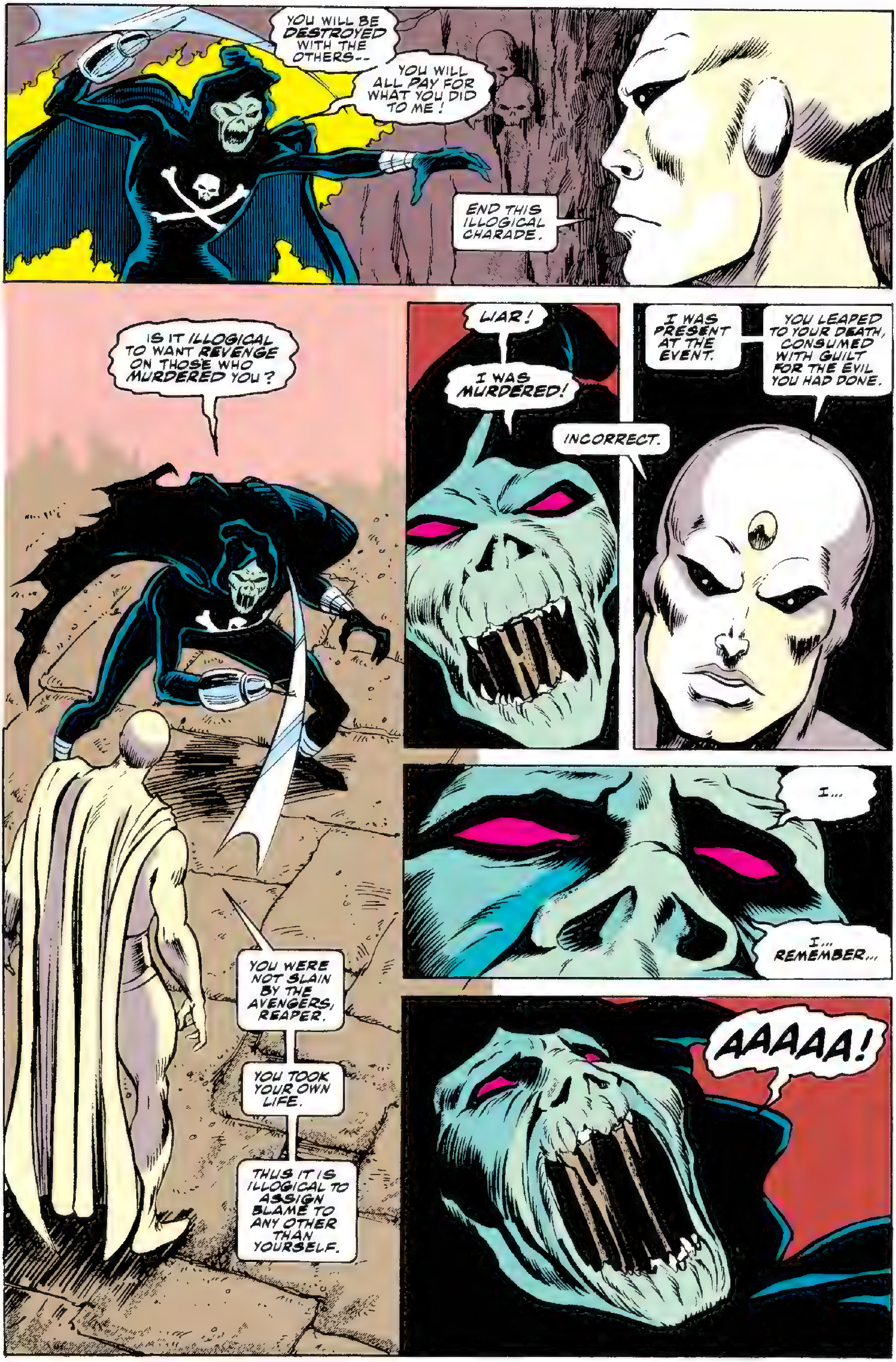

ELSEWHERE...
PATHETIC MORTAL!
WHAT DEFENSE IS ICE AGAINST A FOE COMPOSED OF LIVING FLAME?
HE'S RIGHT.
NEITHER MY FIRE NOR ICE POWERS ARE ANY GOOD AGAINST HIM.
HAVE TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT.
MAYBE SO.
BUT THERE ARE OTHER POWERS AVAILABLE--
--TO AN ELEMENTAL BORN!
RRRMMMMBLL
HAVE TO GET THIS JUST RIGHT--
--OR I'LL BURY MYSELF ALONG WITH HIM!
RRMMMBL
SKA-KRASH

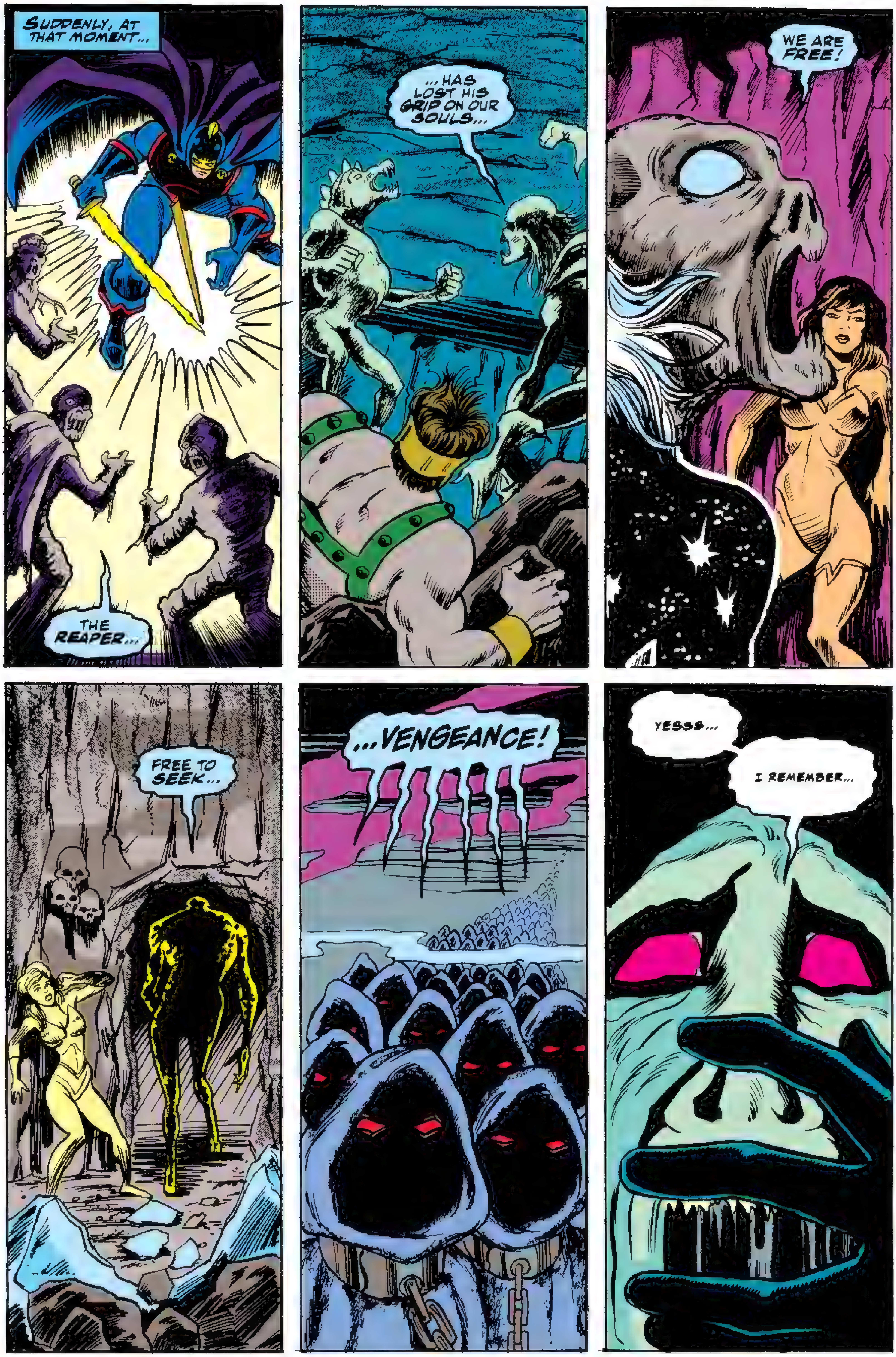

NOW!
GOT TO SEAL HIM UP UNDER THERE!
SSSSSSSS
SSHRAAKK
AGON HELP ME...

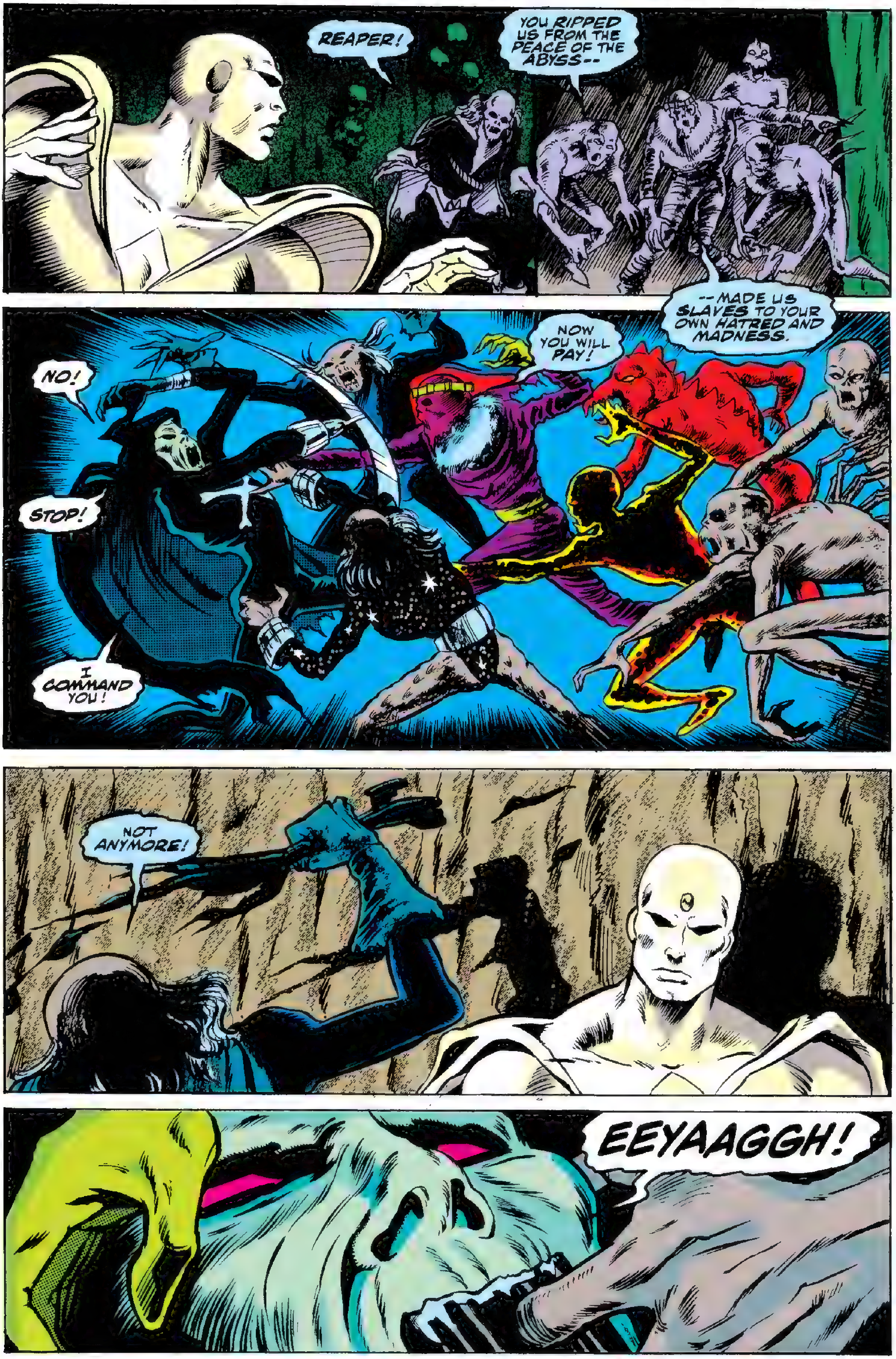

ELSEWHERE...
YESSS...
FILL ME WITH BIOLOGICAL ENERGY...
MAKE ME STRONGER...
SO THAT I MIGHT RIP YOUR LIVING HEART FROM YOUR BODY!
WELL, THAT'S NOT WORKING!
LET'S TRY--
"--MOLECULAR TRANSFORMATION!"
POIT!
AN INTERESTING FORM.
HOWEVER, I PREFER MY OWN.
HOW DID HE DO THAT?
TRY AGAIN...

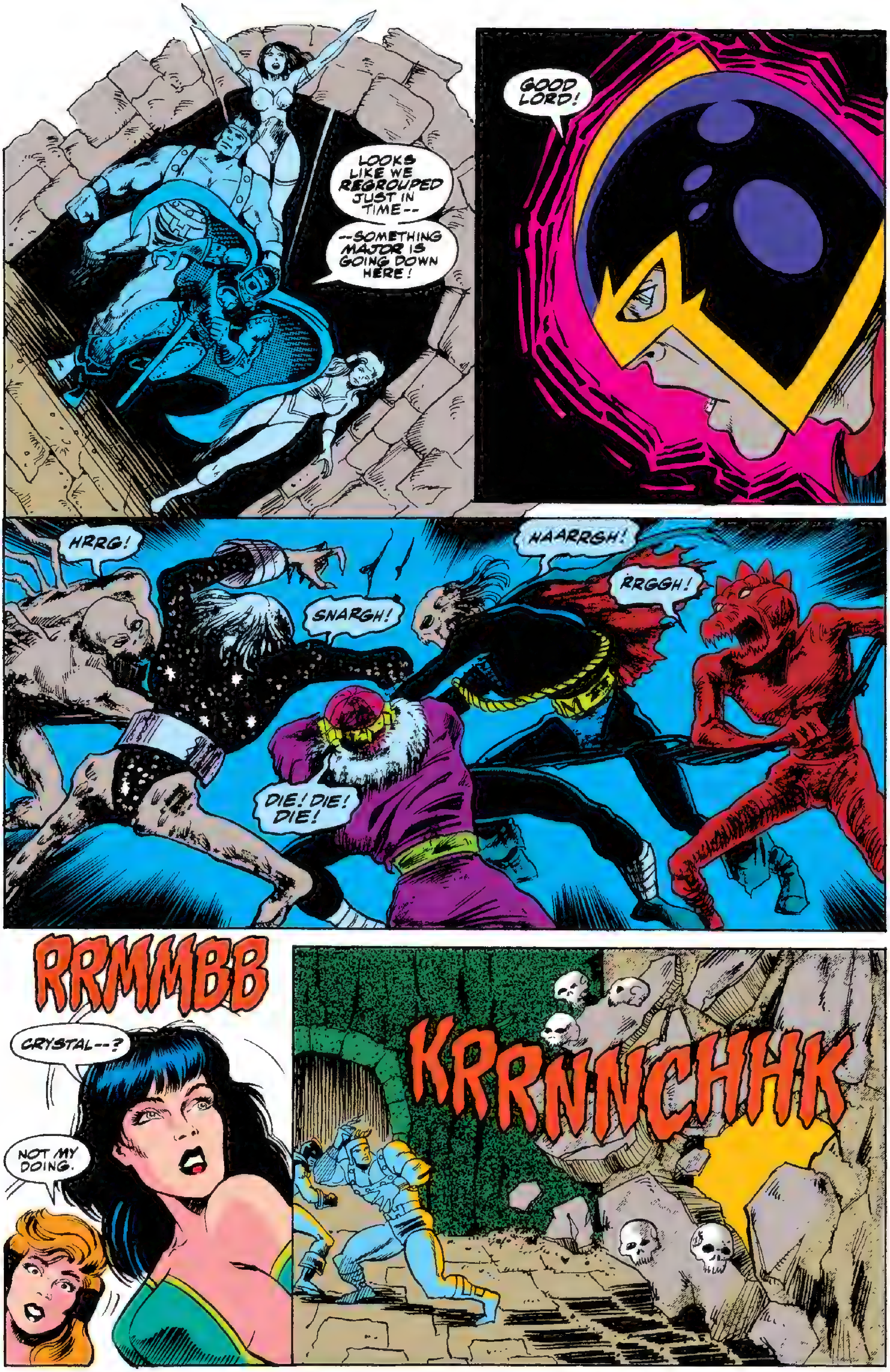
POIT!
YOUR MOLECULAR TRANSFORMATION POWERS ARE USELESS--
AGAIN, BLAST IT!
POIT!
--AGAINST ONE WHO POSSESSES ABSOLUTE MASTERY OVER HIS OWN FORM.
A SHAPE-SHIFTER.
OF COURSE.
NOW WHAT DO I DO?

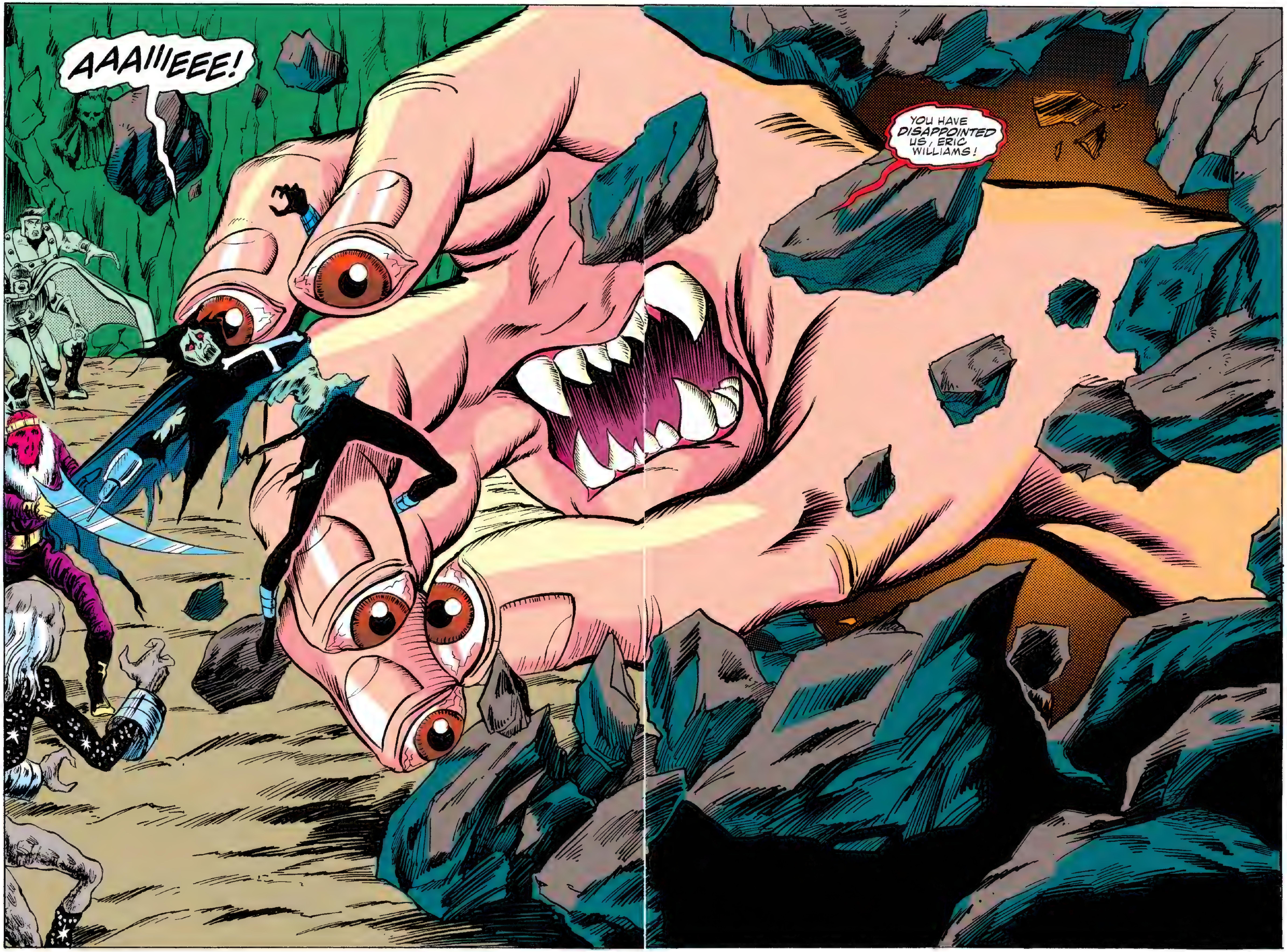

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
THE DANCE IS NEARLY FINISHED.
SOON, THE AVENGERS WILL BE--
REAPER.
WHAT?!
I HAVE COME TO ATTEMPT TO REASON WITH YOU.
SYNTHETIC FOOL!
YOU SHALL SUFFER THE TORMENTS OF--
ENOUGH.
YOUR POWER OVER ME IS LIMITED.
AS I AM NOT TRULY ALIVE, I CANNOT DIE.
I AM INCAPABLE OF FEARING YOU AS YOU DESIRE.

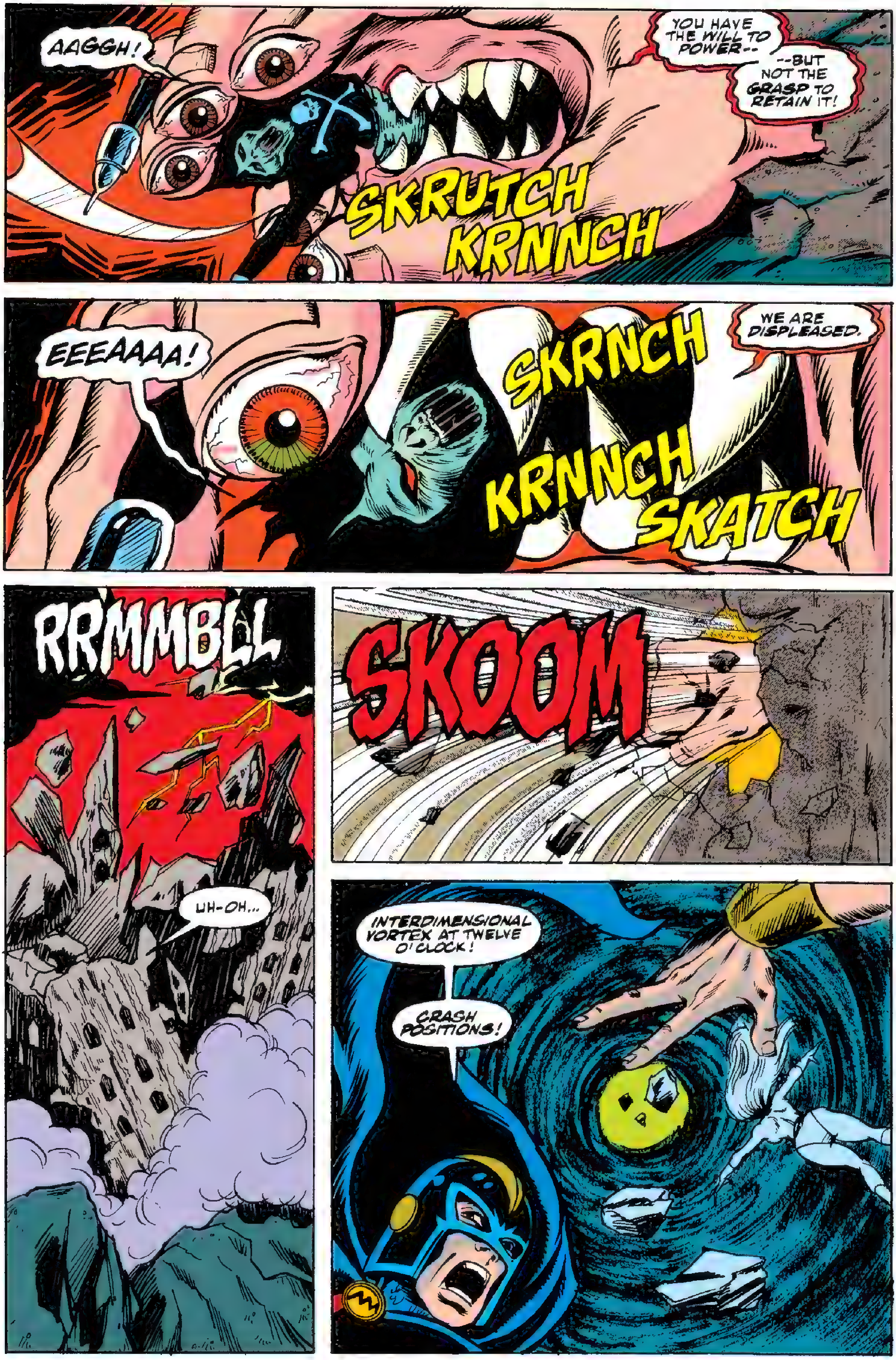

YOU WILL BE DESTROYED WITH THE OTHERS--
YOU WILL ALL PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID TO ME!
END THIS ILLOGICAL CHARADE.
IS IT ILLOGICAL TO WANT REVENGE ON THOSE WHO MURDERED YOU?
LIAR!
I WAS MURDERED!
INCORRECT.
I WAS PRESENT AT THE EVENT.
YOU LEAPED TO YOUR DEATH, CONSUMED WITH GUILT FOR THE EVIL YOU HAD DONE.
YOU WERE NOT SLAIN BY THE AVENGERS, REAPER.
YOU TOOK YOUR OWN LIFE.
THUS IT IS ILLOGICAL TO ASSIGN BLAME TO ANY OTHER THAN YOURSELF.
I...
I... REMEMBER...
AAAAA!

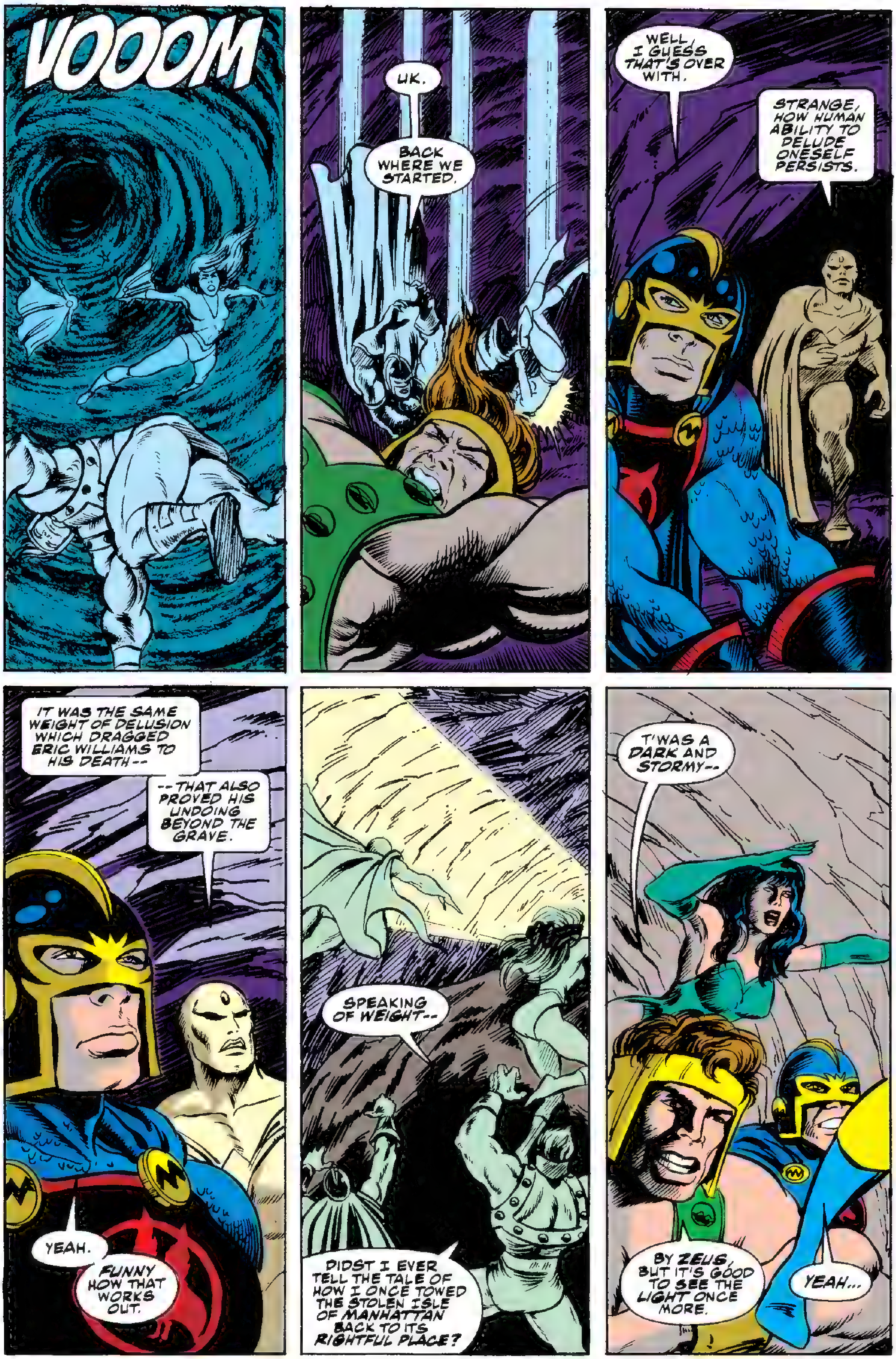

SUDDENLY, AT THAT MOMENT...
THE REAPER...
...HAS LOST HIS GRIP ON OUR SOULS...
WE ARE FREE!
FREE TO SEEK...
...VENGEANCE!
YESSS...
I REMEMBER...

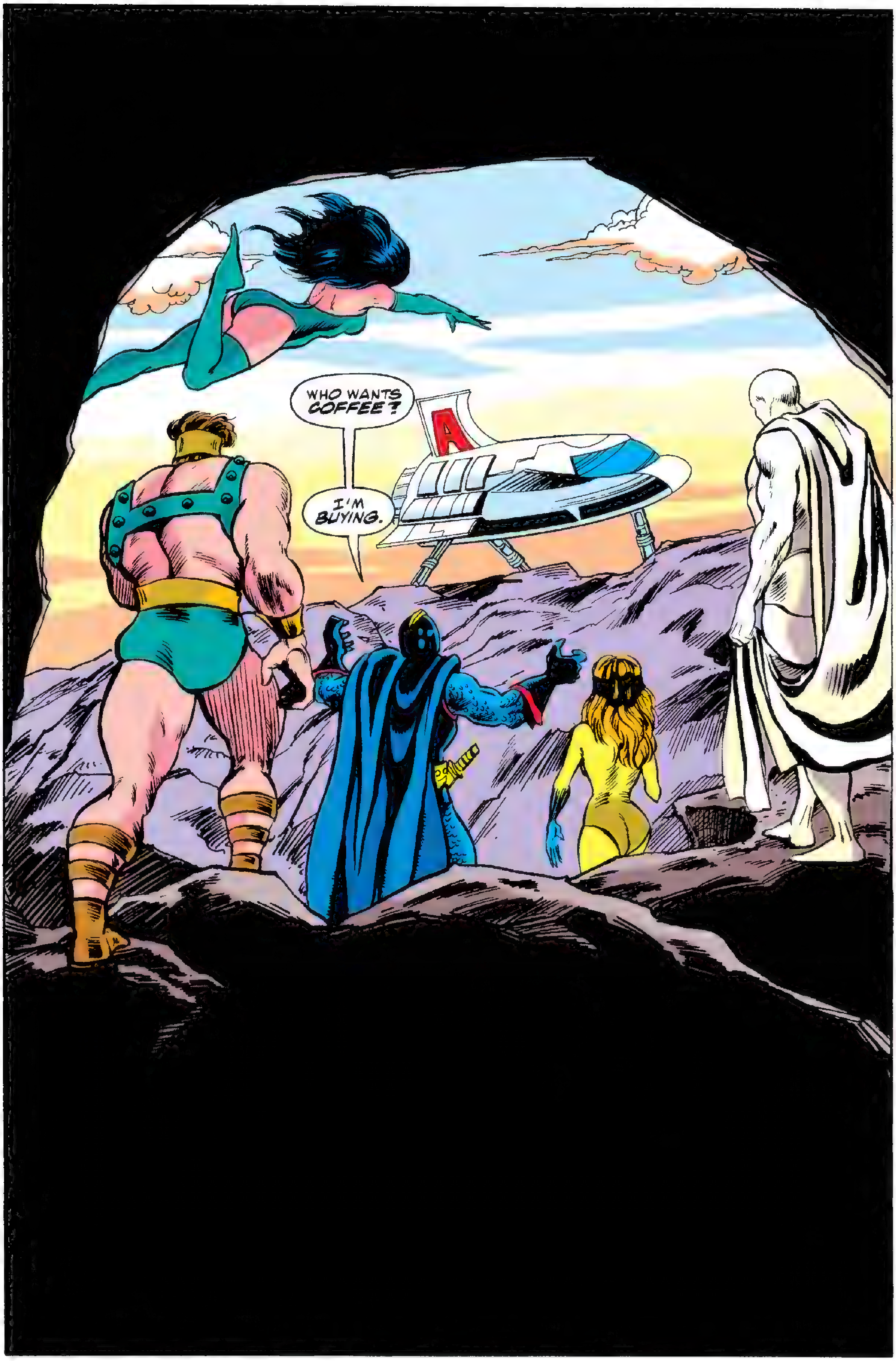

REAPER!
YOU RIPPED US FROM THE PEACE OF THE ABYSS--
NO!
STOP!
I COMMAND YOU!
NOW YOU WILL PAY!
--MADE US SLAVES TO YOUR OWN HATRED AND MADNESS.
NOT ANYMORE!
EEYAAGGH!

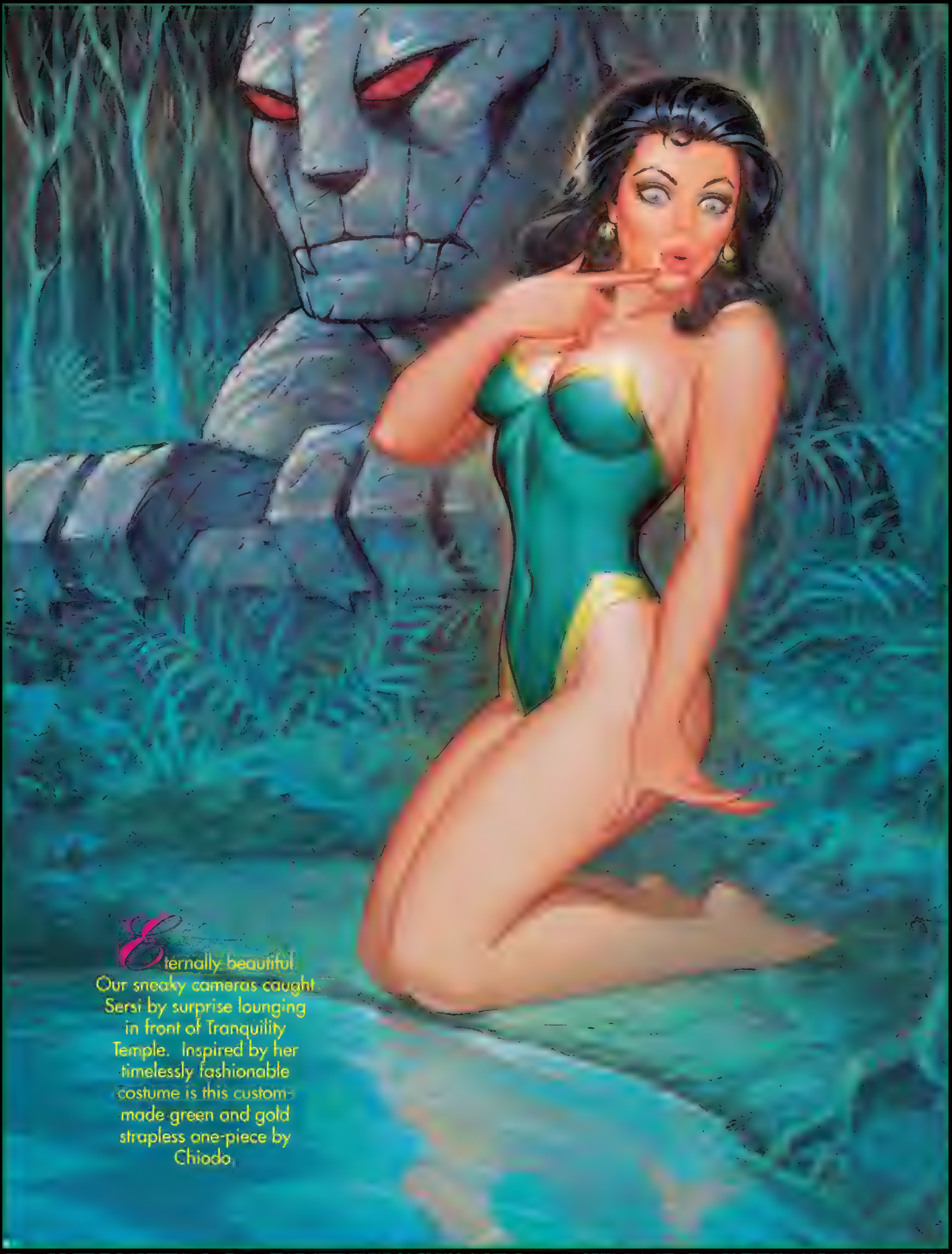

LOOKS LIKE WE REGROUPED JUST IN TIME--
--SOMETHING MAJOR IS GOING DOWN HERE!
GOOD LORD!
HRRG!
SNARGH!
HAARRGH!
RRGGH!
DIE! DIE! DIE!
RRMMBB
CRYSTAL--?
NOT MY DOING.
KRRNNCHHK


AAAIIIEEE!
YOU HAVE DISAPPOINTED US, ERIC WILLIAMS!


AAGGH!
YOU HAVE THE WILL TO POWER--
--BUT NOT THE GRASP TO RETAIN IT!
SKRUTCH KRNNCH
EEEAAAA!
SKRNCH
WE ARE DISPLEASED.
KRNNCH SKATCH
RRMMBLL
UH-OH...
SKOOM
INTERDIMENSIONAL VORTEX AT TWELVE O'CLOCK!
CRASH POSITIONS!


VOOOM
UK.
BACK WHERE WE STARTED.
WELL, I GUESS THAT'S OVER WITH.
STRANGE, HOW HUMAN ABILITY TO DELUDE ONESELF PERSISTS.
IT WAS THE SAME WEIGHT OF DELUSION WHICH DRAGGED ERIC WILLIAMS TO HIS DEATH--
--THAT ALSO PROVED HIS UNDOING BEYOND THE GRAVE.
YEAH.
FUNNY HOW THAT WORKS OUT.
SPEAKING OF WEIGHT--
DIDST I EVER TELL THE TALE OF HOW I ONCE TOWED THE STOLEN ISLE OF MANHATTAN BACK TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE?
T'WAS A DARK AND STORMY--
BY ZEUS, BUT IT'S GOOD TO SEE THE LIGHT ONCE MORE.
YEAH...


WHO WANTS *COFFEE?*
I'M BUYING.



Eternally beautiful. Our sneaky cameras caught Sersi by surprise lounging in front of Tranquility Temple. Inspired by her timelessly fashionable costume is this custom-made green and gold strapless one-piece by Chiodo.

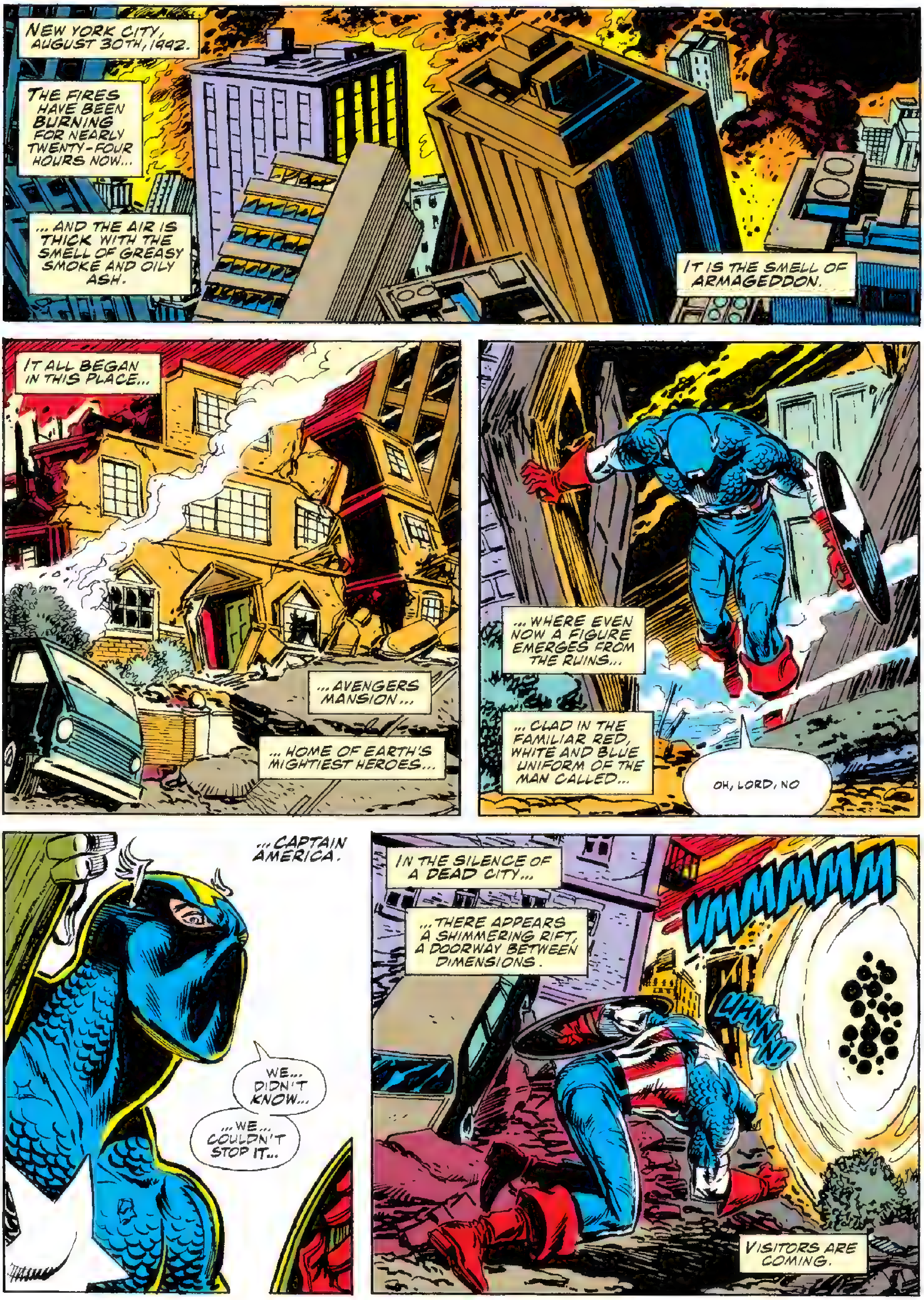
MARVEL SWIMSUIT SPECIAL #1 PINUP BY JOE CHIODO • TEXT BY MATTHEW MORRA

MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
COME THE
GATHERERS
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN/UK 70p
355
LATE OCT
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

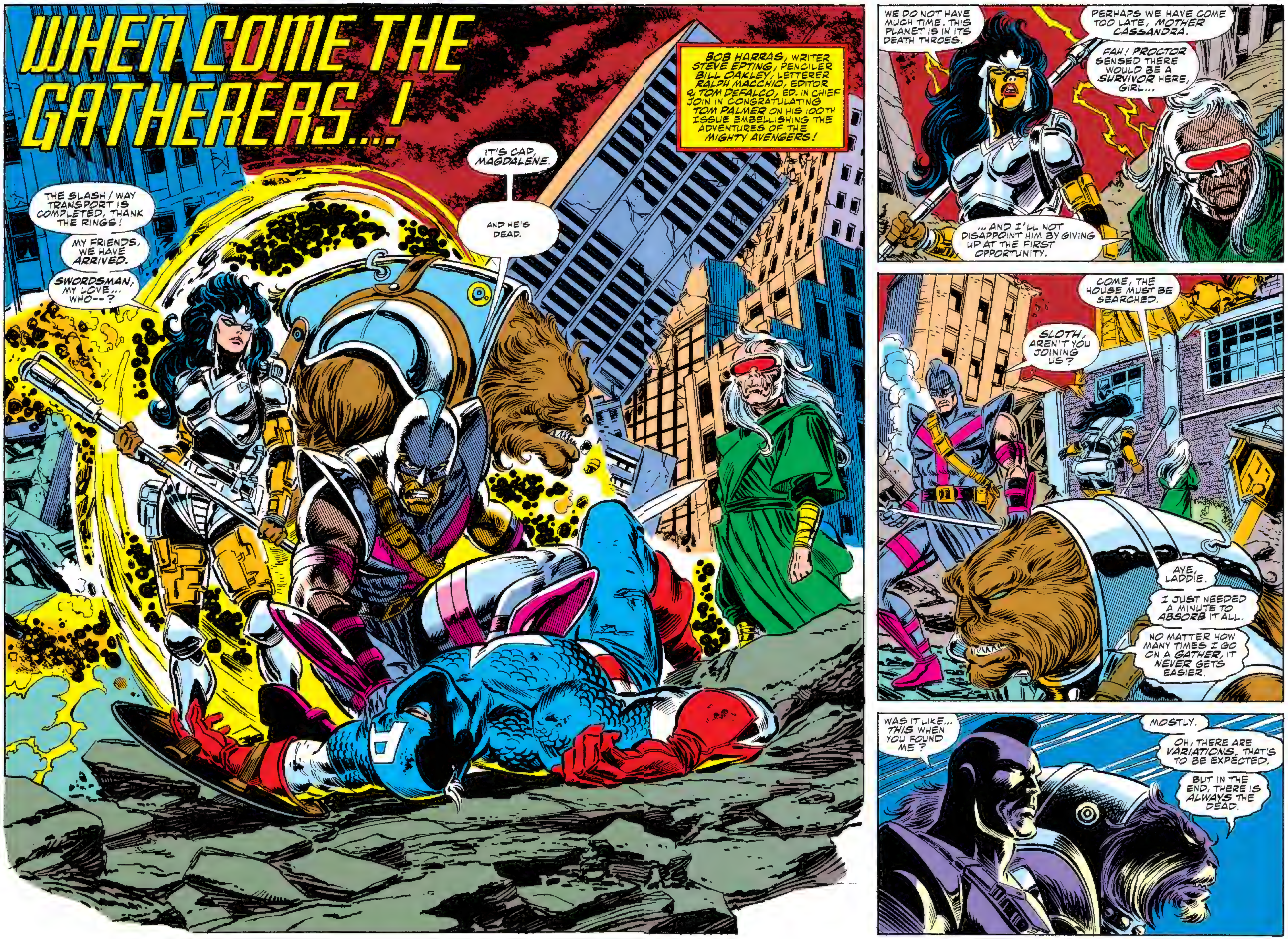
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!

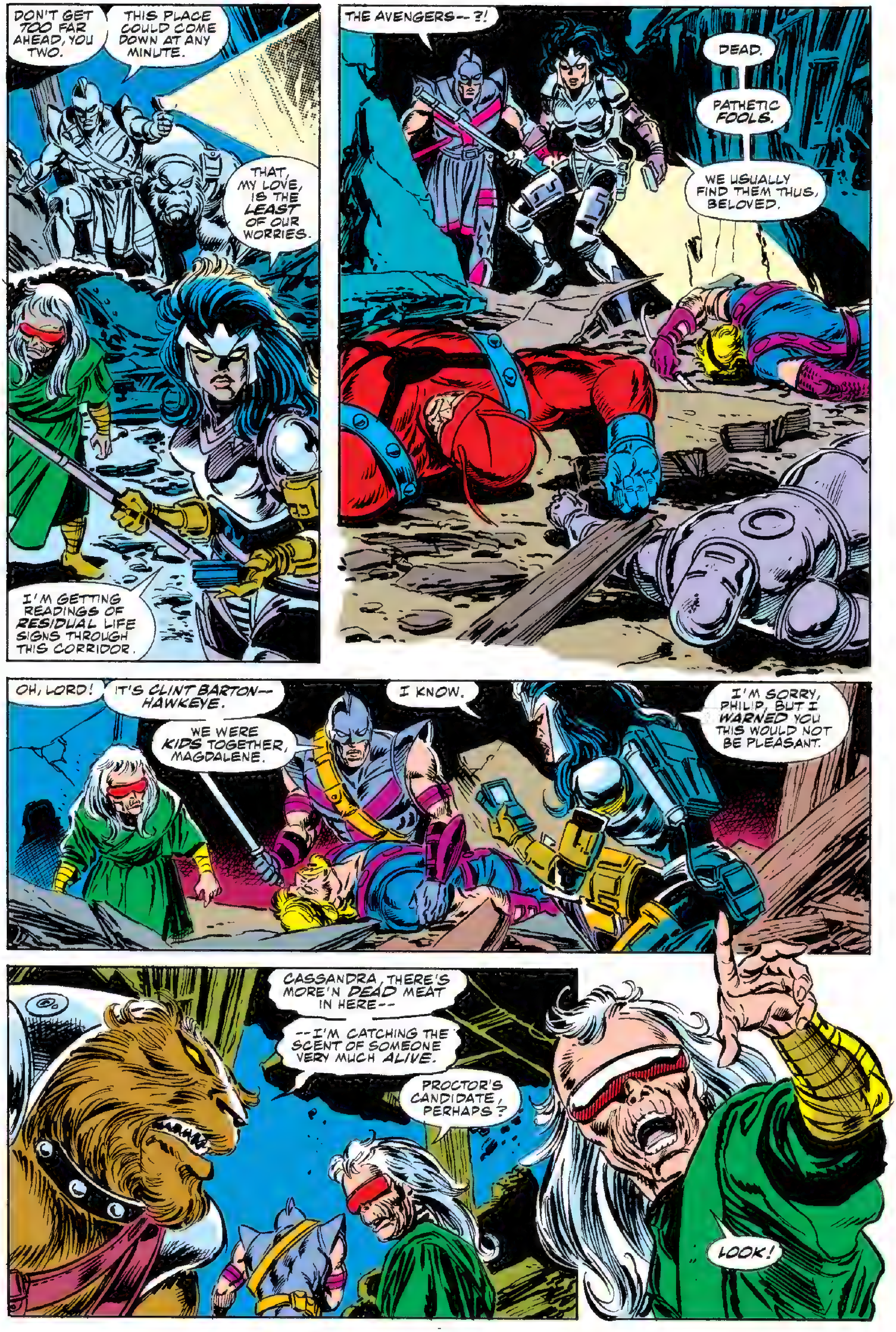
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

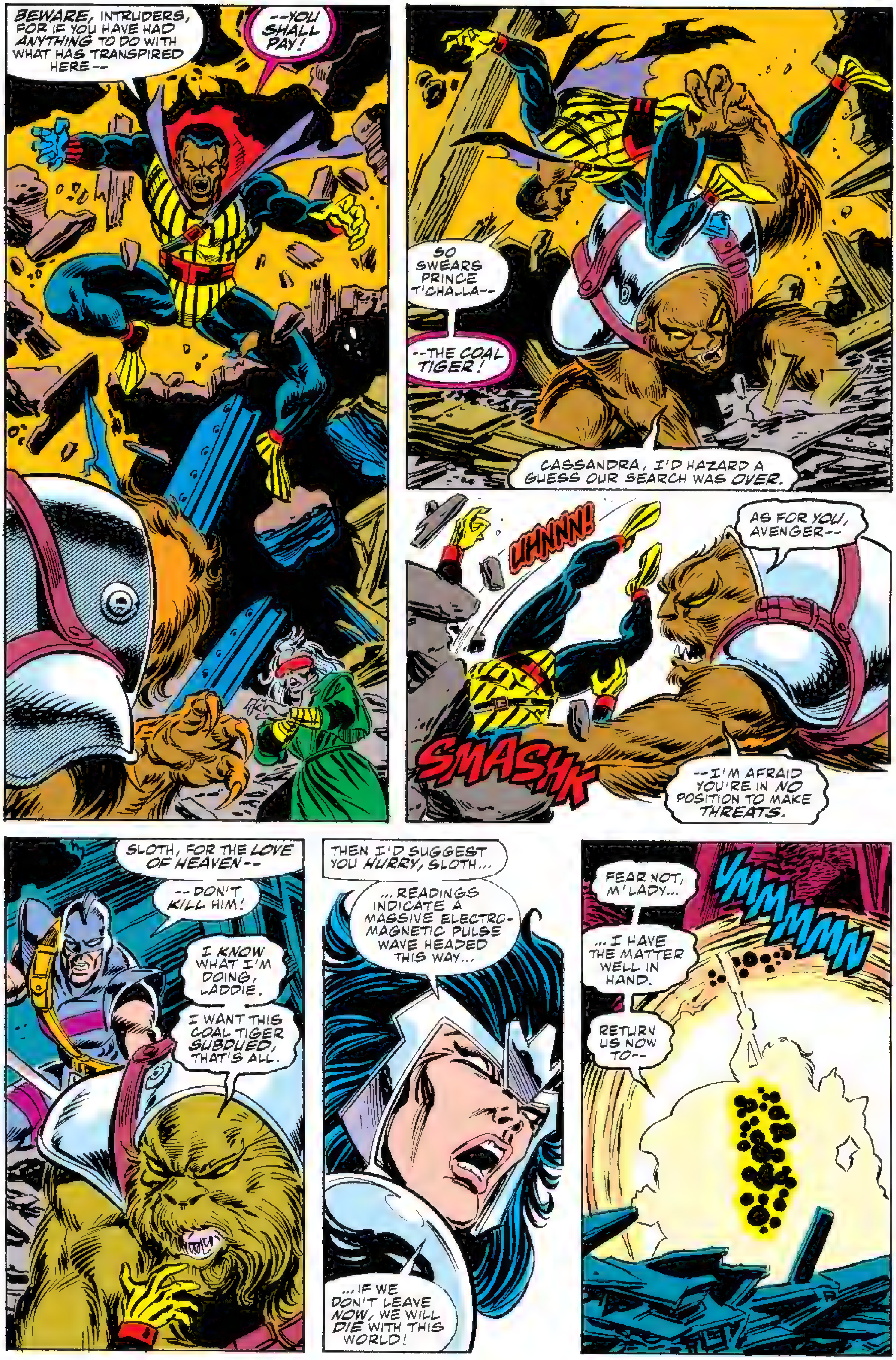
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

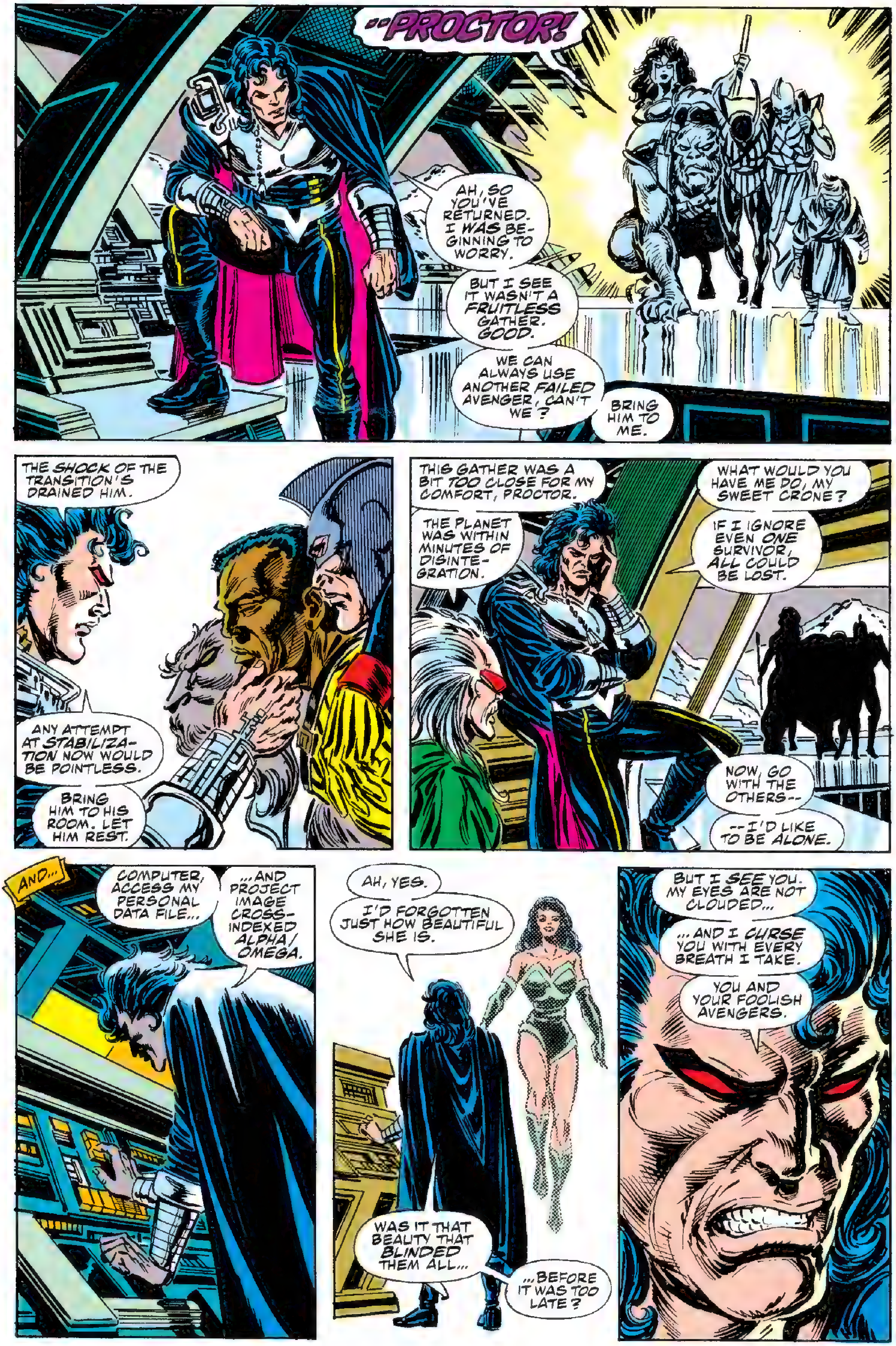

NEW YORK CITY, AUGUST 30TH, 1992.
THE FIRES HAVE BEEN BURNING FOR NEARLY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS NOW...
...AND THE AIR IS THICK WITH THE SMELL OF GREASY SMOKE AND OILY ASH.
IT IS THE SMELL OF ARMAGEDDON.
IT ALL BEGAN IN THIS PLACE...
...AVENGERS MANSION...
...HOME OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES...
...WHERE EVEN NOW A FIGURE EMERGES FROM THE RUINS...
...CLAD IN THE FAMILIAR RED, WHITE AND BLUE UNIFORM OF THE MAN CALLED...
OH, LORD, NO
...CAPTAIN AMERICA.
WE... DIDN'T KNOW...
...WE... COULDN'T STOP IT...
IN THE SILENCE OF A DEAD CITY...
...THERE APPEARS A SHIMMERING RIFT, A DOORWAY BETWEEN DIMENSIONS.
VMMMMMM
UHNN!
VISITORS ARE COMING.

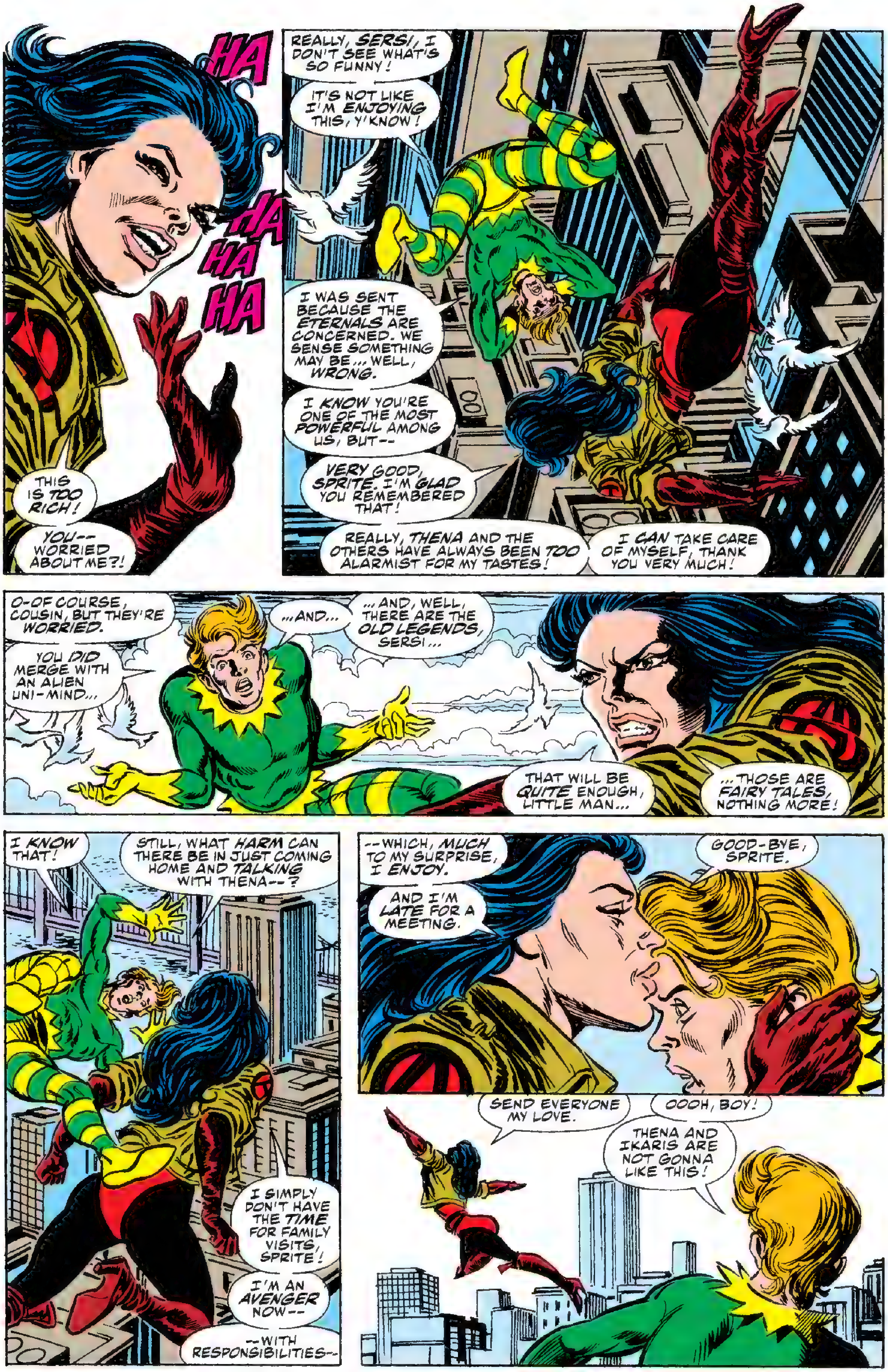
WHEN COME THE GATHERERS...!

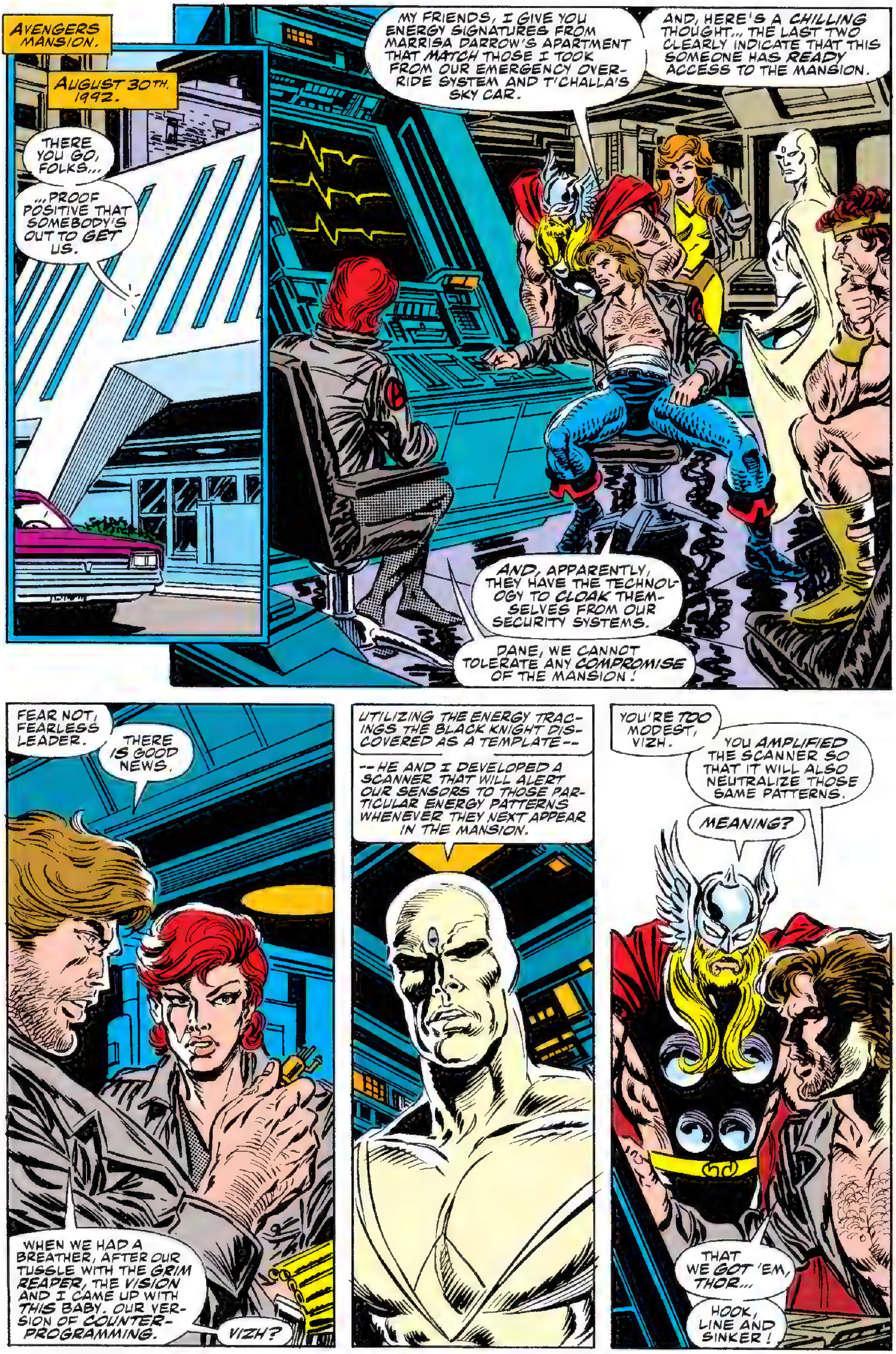

BOB HARRAS, WRITER STEVE EPTING, PENCILER BILL OAKLEY, LETTERER RALPH MACCHIO, EDITOR & TOM DEFALCO, ED. IN CHIEF JOIN IN CONGRATULATING TOM PALMER ON HIS 100TH ISSUE EMBELLISHING THE ADVENTURES OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
THE SLASH/WAY TRANSPORT IS COMPLETED, THANK THE RINGS!
MY FRIENDS, WE HAVE ARRIVED.
SWORDSMAN, MY LOVE... WHO--?
IT'S CAP, MAGDALENE.
AND HE'S DEAD.
WE DO NOT HAVE MUCH TIME. THIS PLANET IS IN ITS DEATH THROES.
PERHAPS WE HAVE COME TOO LATE, MOTHER CASSANDRA.
FAH! PROCTOR SENSED THERE WOULD BE A SURVIVOR HERE, GIRL...
...AND I'LL NOT DISAPPOINT HIM BY GIVING UP AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY.
COME, THE HOUSE MUST BE SEARCHED.
SLOTH, AREN'T YOU JOINING US?
AYE, LADDIE.
I JUST NEEDED A MINUTE TO ABSORB IT ALL.
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I GO ON A GATHER, IT NEVER GETS EASIER.
WAS IT LIKE... THIS WHEN YOU FOUND ME?
MOSTLY.
OH, THERE ARE VARIATIONS, THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED.
BUT IN THE END, THERE IS ALWAYS THE DEAD.

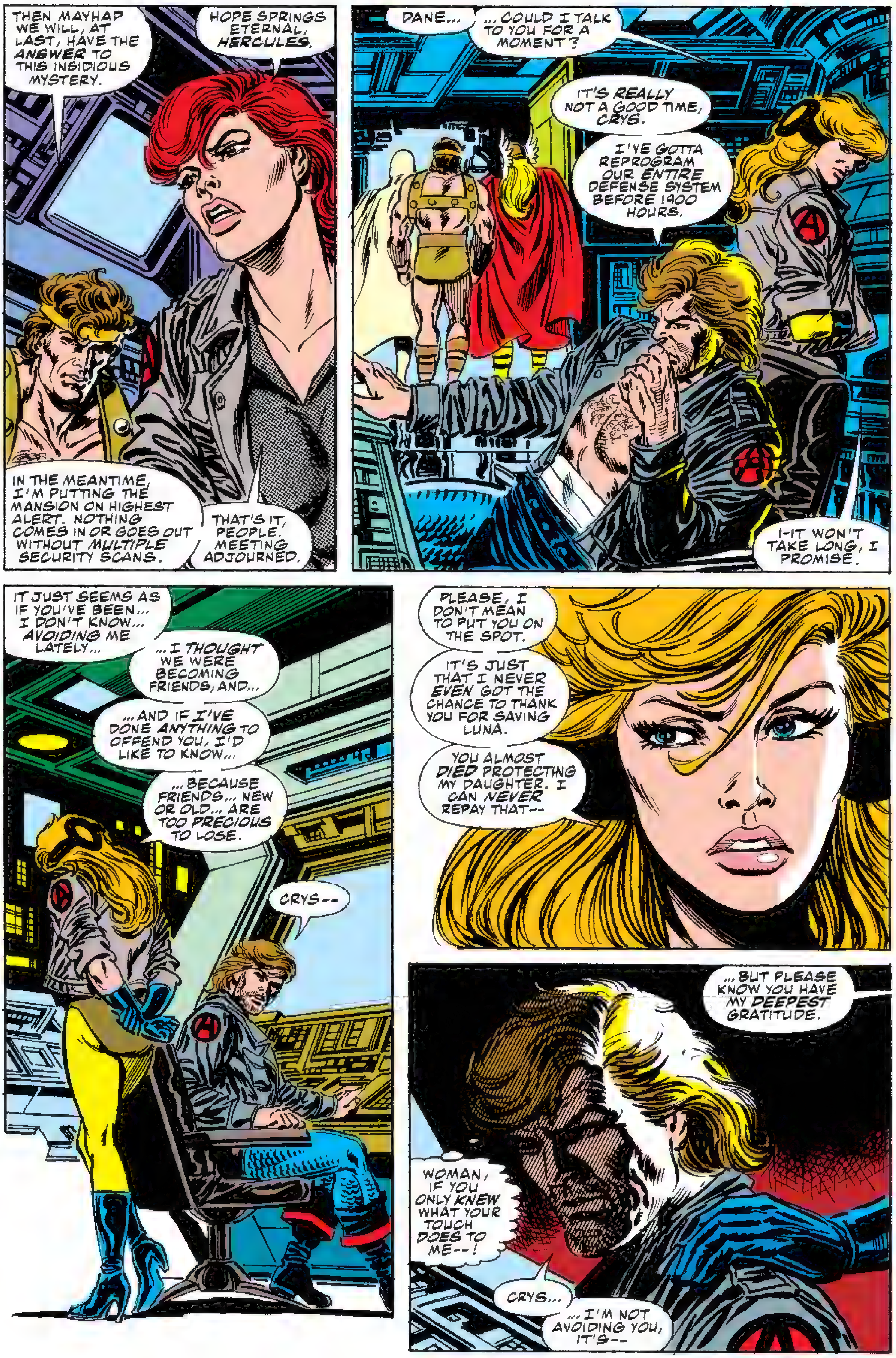

DON'T GET *TOO* FAR AHEAD, YOU TWO.
THIS PLACE COULD COME DOWN AT ANY MINUTE.
THAT, MY LOVE, IS THE *LEAST* OF OUR WORRIES.
I'M GETTING READINGS OF *RESIDUAL* LIFE SIGNS THROUGH THIS CORRIDOR.
THE AVENGERS--?!
DEAD.
PATHETIC *FOOLS.*
WE USUALLY FIND THEM THUS, BELOVED.
OH, LORD!
IT'S *CLINT BARTON*--HAWKEYE.
WE WERE *KIDS* TOGETHER, MAGDALENE.
I KNOW.
I'M SORRY, PHILIP, BUT I *WARNED* YOU THIS WOULD NOT BE PLEASANT.
CASSANDRA, THERE'S MORE'N *DEAD* MEAT IN HERE--
--I'M CATCHING THE SCENT OF SOMEONE VERY MUCH *ALIVE.*
PROCTOR'S CANDIDATE, PERHAPS?
LOOK!

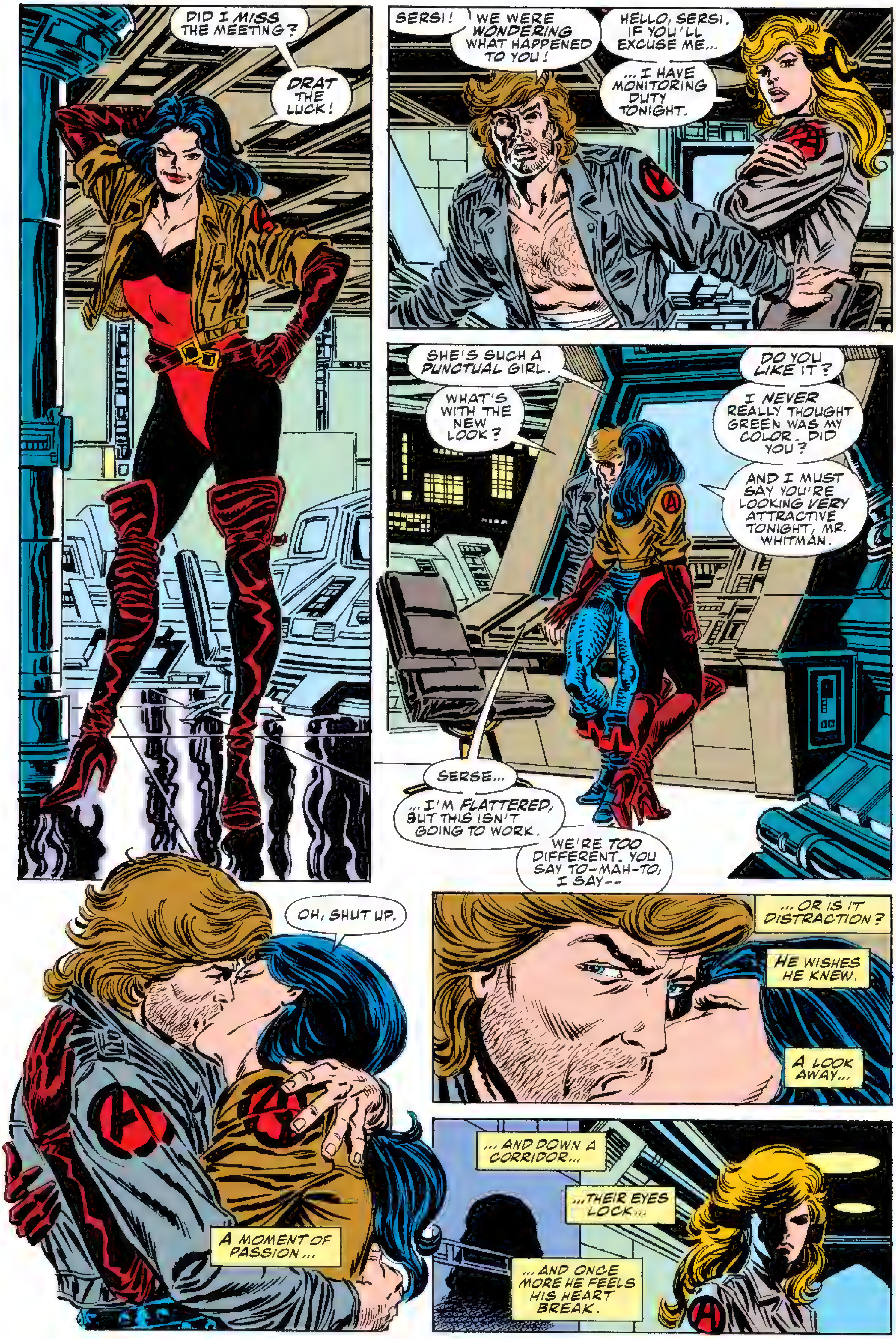

BEWARE, INTRUDERS, FOR IF YOU HAVE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED HERE--
--YOU SHALL PAY!
SO SWEARS PRINCE T'CHA-LA--
--THE COAL TIGER!
CASSANDRA, I'D HAZARD A GUESS OUR SEARCH WAS OVER.
UHNNN!
AS FOR YOU, AVENGER--
SMASHK
--I'M AFRAID YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO MAKE THREATS.
SLOTH, FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN--
--DON'T KILL HIM!
I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING, LADDIE.
I WANT THIS COAL TIGER SUBDUED, THAT'S ALL.
THEN I'D SUGGEST YOU HURRY, SLOTH...
...READINGS INDICATE A MASSIVE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC PULSE WAVE HEADED THIS WAY...
...IF WE DON'T LEAVE NOW, WE WILL DIE WITH THIS WORLD!
FEAR NOT, M'LADY...
...I HAVE THE MATTER WELL IN HAND.
RETURN US NOW TO--
VMMMMMN


--PROCTOR!
AH, SO YOU'VE RETURNED. I *WAS* BEGINNING TO WORRY.
BUT I SEE IT WASN'T A *FRUITLESS* GATHER. *GOOD.*
WE CAN ALWAYS USE ANOTHER *FAILED* AVENGER, CAN'T WE?
BRING HIM TO ME.
THE *SHOCK* OF THE TRANSITION'S DRAINED HIM.
ANY ATTEMPT AT *STABILIZATION* NOW WOULD BE POINTLESS.
BRING HIM TO HIS ROOM. LET HIM REST.
THIS GATHER WAS A BIT *TOO CLOSE* FOR MY COMFORT, PROCTOR.
THE PLANET WAS WITHIN MINUTES OF DISINTEGRATION.
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO, MY SWEET CRONE?
IF I IGNORE EVEN *ONE* SURVIVOR, *ALL* COULD BE LOST.
NOW, GO WITH THE OTHERS--
--I'D LIKE TO BE *ALONE*.
AND...
COMPUTER, ACCESS MY PERSONAL DATA FILE...
...AND PROJECT IMAGE CROSS-INDEXED *ALPHA/OMEGA*.
AH, YES.
I'D FORGOTTEN JUST HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS.
WAS IT THAT BEAUTY THAT *BLINDED* THEM ALL...
...BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE?
BUT I *SEE* YOU. MY EYES ARE NOT CLOUDED...
...AND I *CURSE* YOU WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE.
YOU AND YOUR FOOLISH AVENGERS.

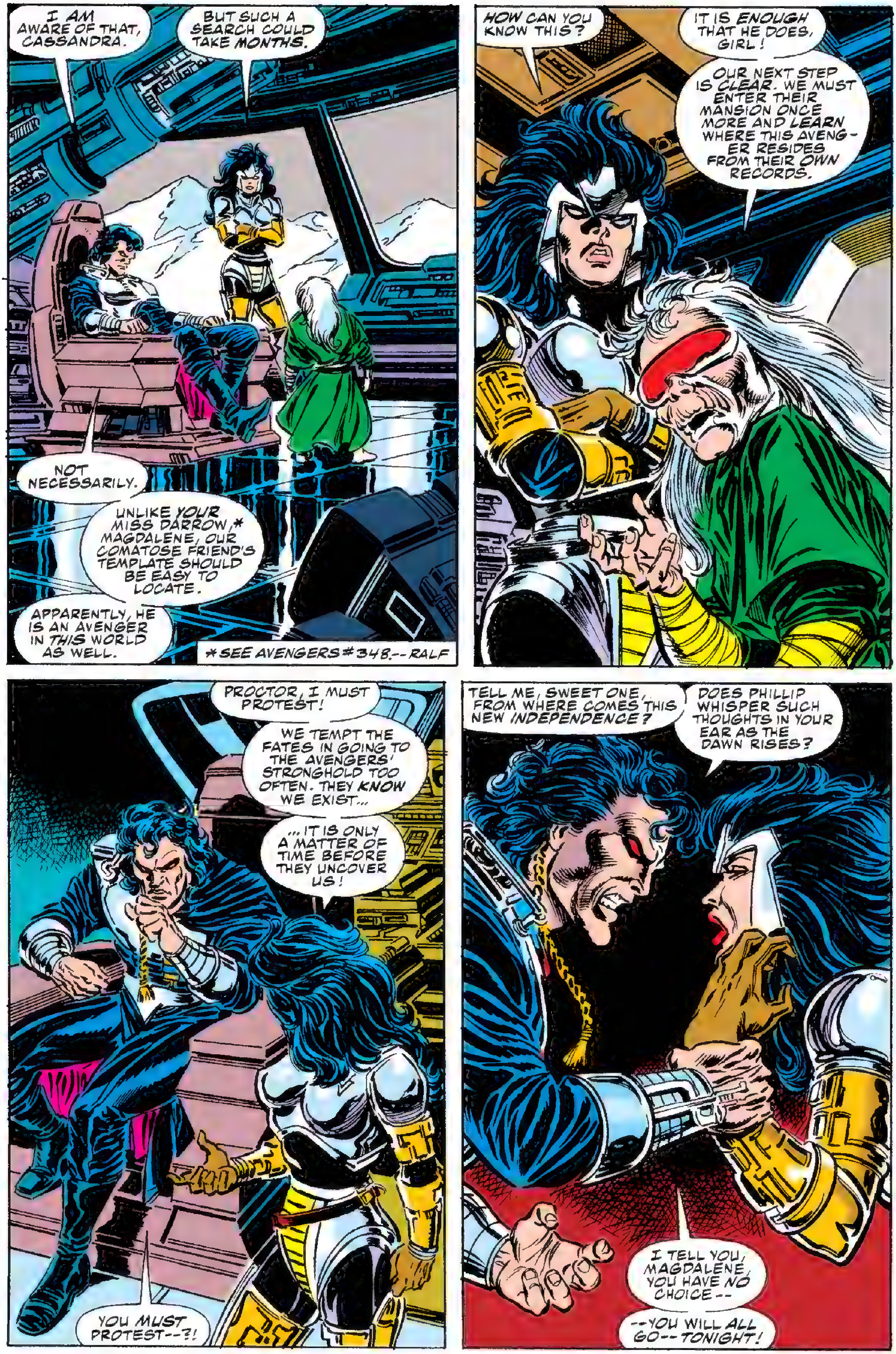

HA
HA
HA
HA
THIS IS TOO RICH!
YOU-- WORRIED ABOUT ME?!
REALLY, SERSI, I DON'T SEE WHAT'S SO FUNNY!
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M ENJOYING THIS, Y'KNOW!
I WAS SENT BECAUSE THE ETERNALS ARE CONCERNED. WE SENSE SOMETHING MAY BE... WELL, WRONG.
I KNOW YOU'RE ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL AMONG US, BUT--
VERY GOOD, SPRITE. I'M GLAD YOU REMEMBERED THAT!
REALLY, THENA AND THE OTHERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TOO ALARMIST FOR MY TASTES!
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
O-OF COURSE, COUSIN, BUT THEY'RE WORRIED.
YOU DID MERGE WITH AN ALIEN UNI-MIND...
...AND...
...AND, WELL, THERE ARE THE OLD LEGENDS, SERSI...
THAT WILL BE QUITE ENOUGH, LITTLE MAN...
...THOSE ARE FAIRY TALES, NOTHING MORE!
I KNOW THAT!
STILL, WHAT HARM CAN THERE BE IN JUST COMING HOME AND TALKING WITH THENA--?
I SIMPLY DON'T HAVE THE TIME FOR FAMILY VISITS, SPRITE!
I'M AN AVENGER NOW--
--WITH RESPONSIBILITIES--
--WHICH, MUCH TO MY SURPRISE, I ENJOY.
AND I'M LATE FOR A MEETING.
GOOD-BYE, SPRITE.
SEND EVERYONE MY LOVE.
OOOH, BOY!
THENA AND IKARIS ARE NOT GONNA LIKE THIS!

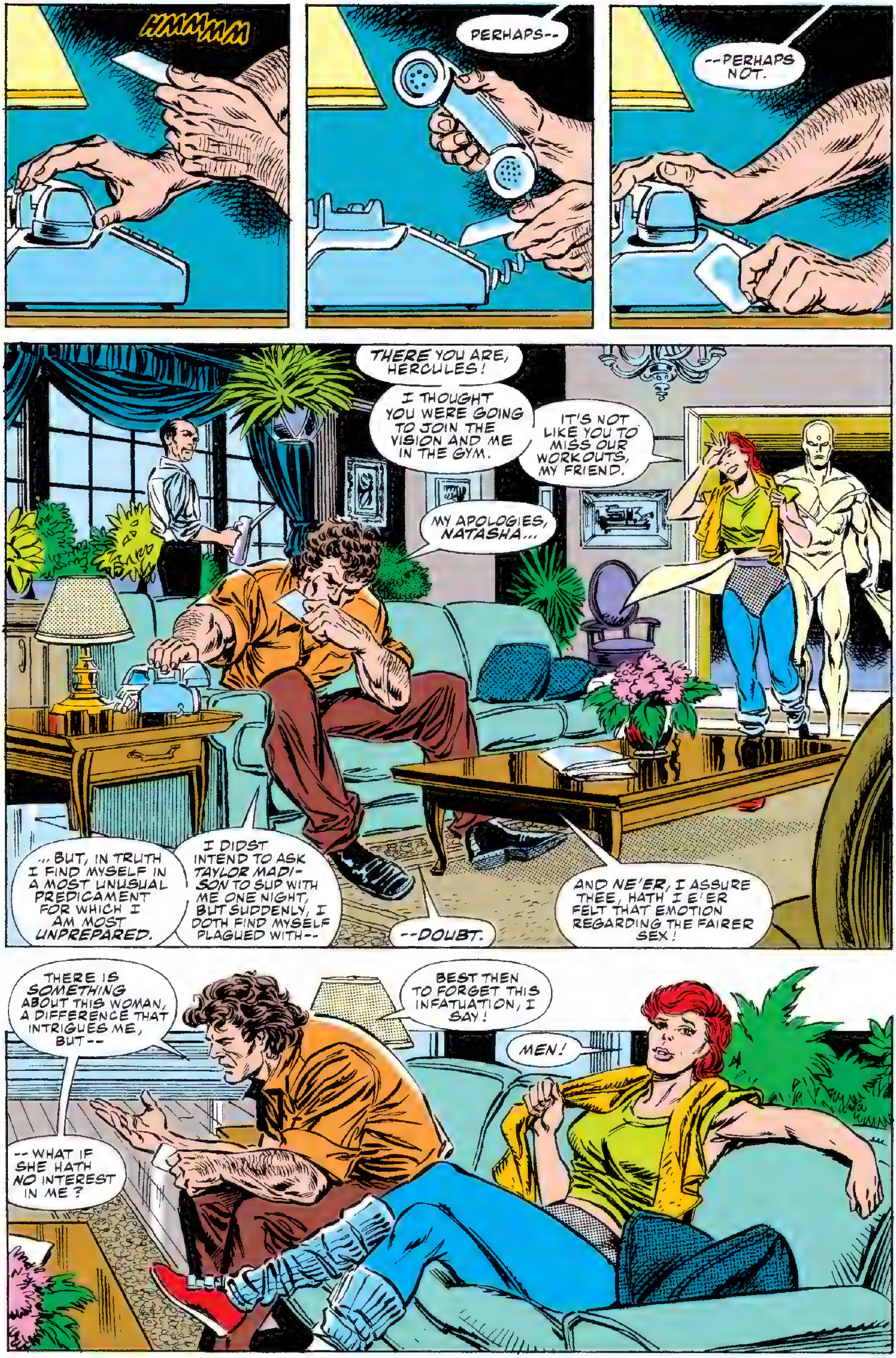

AVENGERS MANSION.
AUGUST 30TH, 1992.
THERE YOU GO, FOLKS...
...PROOF POSITIVE THAT SOMEBODY'S OUT TO GET US.
MY FRIENDS, I GIVE YOU ENERGY SIGNATURES FROM MARRISA DARROW'S APARTMENT THAT MATCH THOSE I TOOK FROM OUR EMERGENCY OVERRIDE SYSTEM AND T'CHALLA'S SKY CAR.
AND, HERE'S A CHILLING THOUGHT... THE LAST TWO CLEARLY INDICATE THAT THIS SOMEONE HAS READY ACCESS TO THE MANSION.
AND, APPARENTLY, THEY HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY TO CLOAK THEMSELVES FROM OUR SECURITY SYSTEMS.
DANE, WE CANNOT TOLERATE ANY COMPROMISE OF THE MANSION!
FEAR NOT, FEARLESS LEADER.
THERE IS GOOD NEWS.
WHEN WE HAD A BREATHER, AFTER OUR TUSSLE WITH THE GRIM REAPER, THE VISION AND I CAME UP WITH THIS BABY. OUR VERSION OF COUNTER-PROGRAMMING.
VIZH?
UTILIZING THE ENERGY TRACINGS THE BLACK KNIGHT DISCOVERED AS A TEMPLATE--
--HE AND I DEVELOPED A SCANNER THAT WILL ALERT OUR SENSORS TO THOSE PARTICULAR ENERGY PATTERNS WHENEVER THEY NEXT APPEAR IN THE MANSION.
YOU'RE TOO MODEST, VIZH.
YOU AMPLIFIED THE SCANNER SO THAT IT WILL ALSO NEUTRALIZE THOSE SAME PATTERNS.
MEANING?
THAT WE GOT 'EM, THOR...
HOOK, LINE AND SINKER!

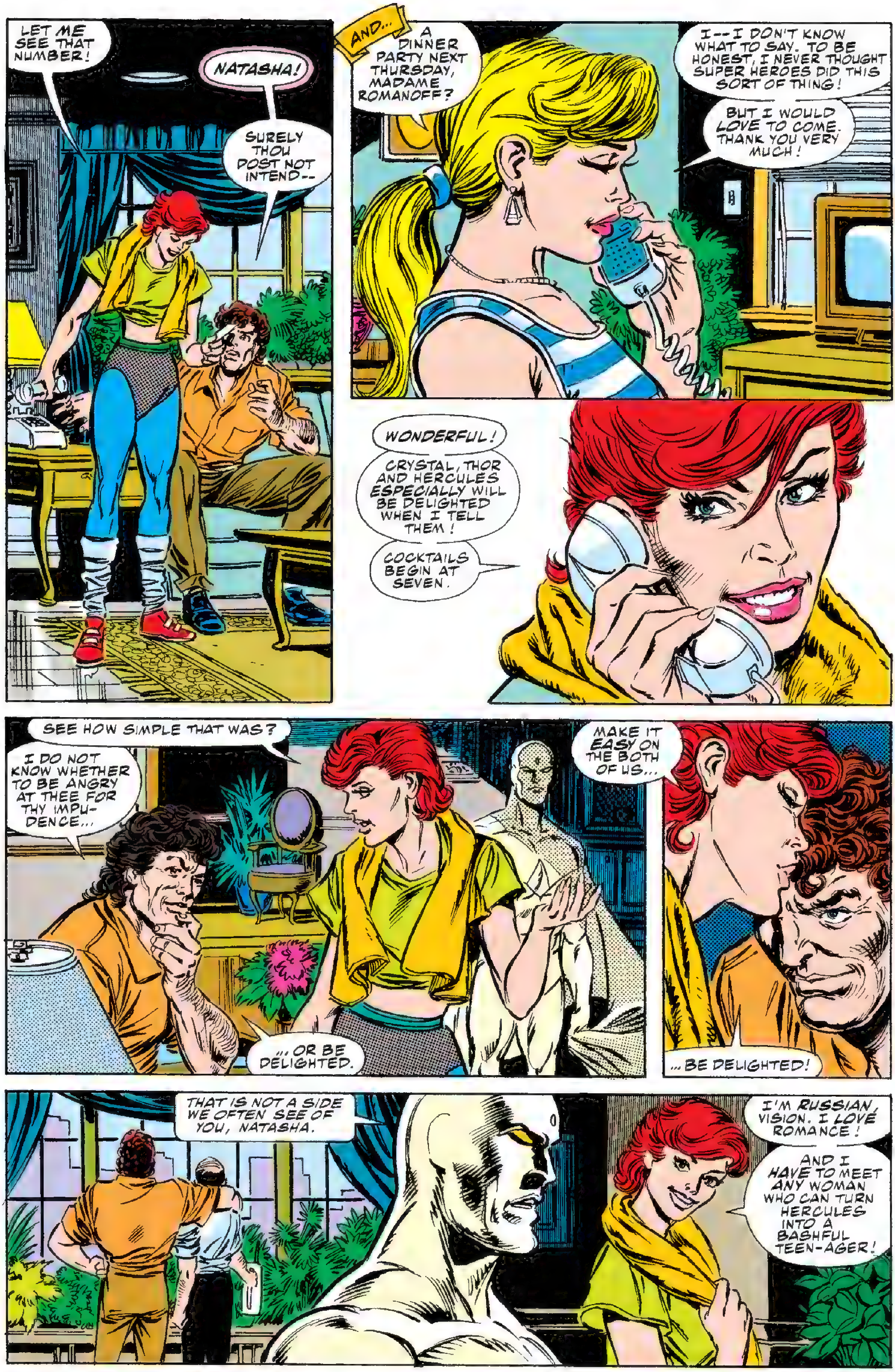

THEN MAYHAP WE WILL, AT LAST, HAVE THE *ANSWER* TO THIS INSIDIOUS MYSTERY.
HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL, *HERCULES*.
IN THE MEANTIME, I'M PUTTING THE MANSION ON HIGHEST ALERT. NOTHING COMES IN OR GOES OUT WITHOUT *MULTIPLE* SECURITY SCANS.
THAT'S IT, PEOPLE. MEETING ADJOURNED.
DANE...
...COULD I TALK TO YOU FOR A MOMENT?
IT'S *REALLY* NOT A GOOD TIME, *CRYS*.
I'VE GOTTA REPROGRAM OUR *ENTIRE* DEFENSE SYSTEM BEFORE 1900 HOURS.
I-IT WON'T TAKE LONG, I PROMISE.
IT JUST SEEMS AS IF YOU'VE BEEN... I DON'T KNOW... *AVOIDING* ME LATELY...
...I *THOUGHT* WE WERE BECOMING FRIENDS, AND...
...AND IF *I'VE* DONE *ANYTHING* TO OFFEND YOU, I'D LIKE TO KNOW...
...BECAUSE FRIENDS... NEW OR OLD... ARE TOO *PRECIOUS* TO LOSE.
CRYS--
PLEASE, I DON'T MEAN TO PUT YOU ON THE SPOT.
IT'S JUST THAT I NEVER *EVEN* GOT THE CHANCE TO THANK YOU FOR SAVING LUNA.
YOU ALMOST *DIED* PROTECTING MY DAUGHTER. I CAN *NEVER* REPAY THAT--
...BUT PLEASE KNOW YOU HAVE MY *DEEPEST* GRATITUDE.
WOMAN, IF YOU ONLY *KNEW* WHAT YOUR TOUCH *DOES* TO ME--!
CRYS...
...I'M NOT AVOIDING YOU, IT'S--

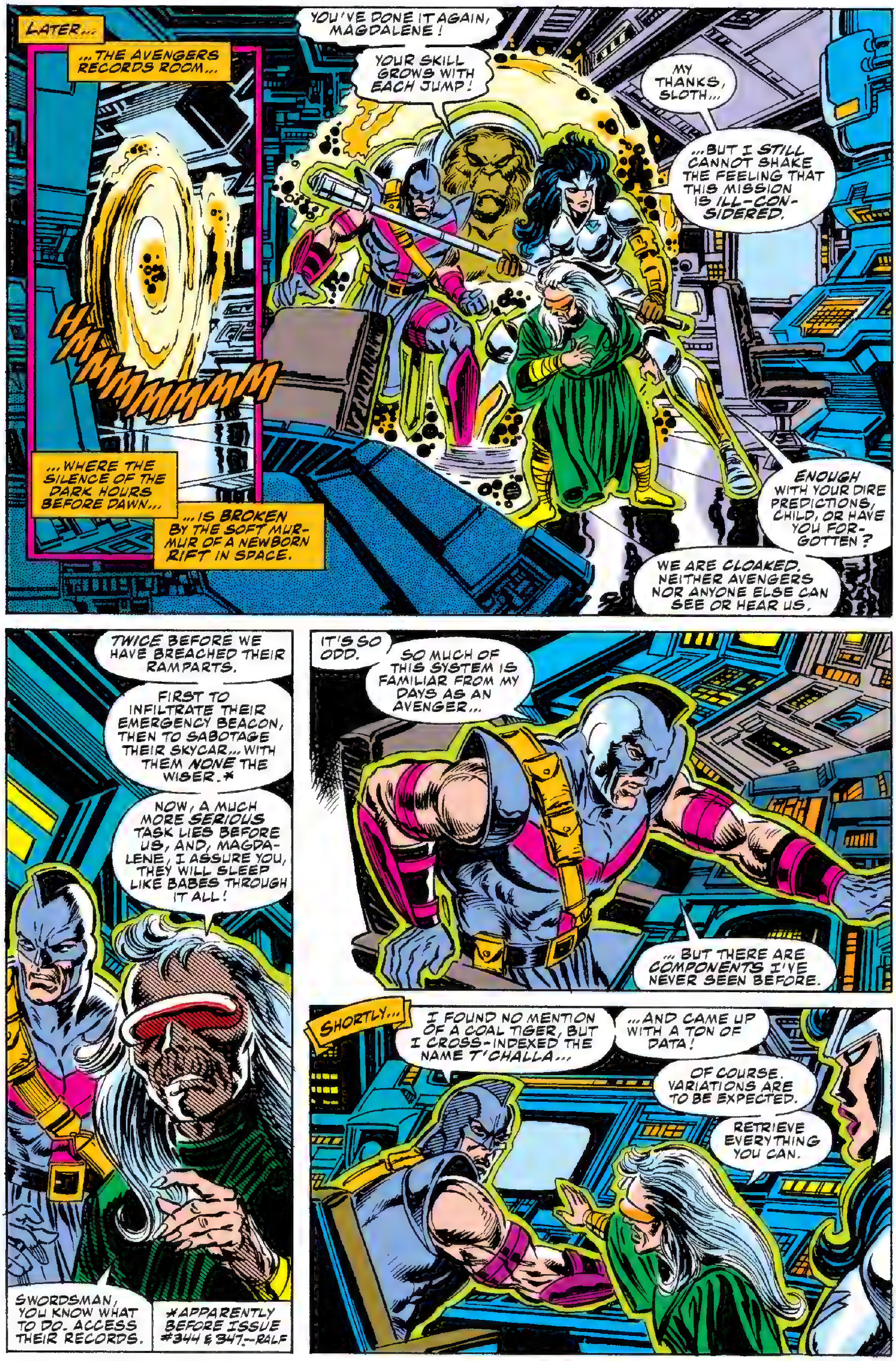

DID I MISS THE MEETING?
DRAT THE LUCK!
SERSI! WE WERE WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU!
HELLO, SERSI. IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...
...I HAVE MONITORING DUTY TONIGHT.
SHE'S SUCH A PUNCTUAL GIRL.
WHAT'S WITH THE NEW LOOK?
DO YOU LIKE IT?
I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT GREEN WAS MY COLOR. DID YOU?
AND I MUST SAY YOU'RE LOOKING VERY ATTRACTIVE TONIGHT, MR. WHITMAN.
SERSE...
...I'M FLATTERED, BUT THIS ISN'T GOING TO WORK.
WE'RE TOO DIFFERENT. YOU SAY TO-MAH-TO, I SAY--
OH, SHUT UP.
A MOMENT OF PASSION...
...OR IS IT DISTRACTION?
HE WISHES HE KNEW.
A LOOK AWAY...
...AND DOWN A CORRIDOR...
...THEIR EYES LOCK...
...AND ONCE MORE HE FEELS HIS HEART BREAK.

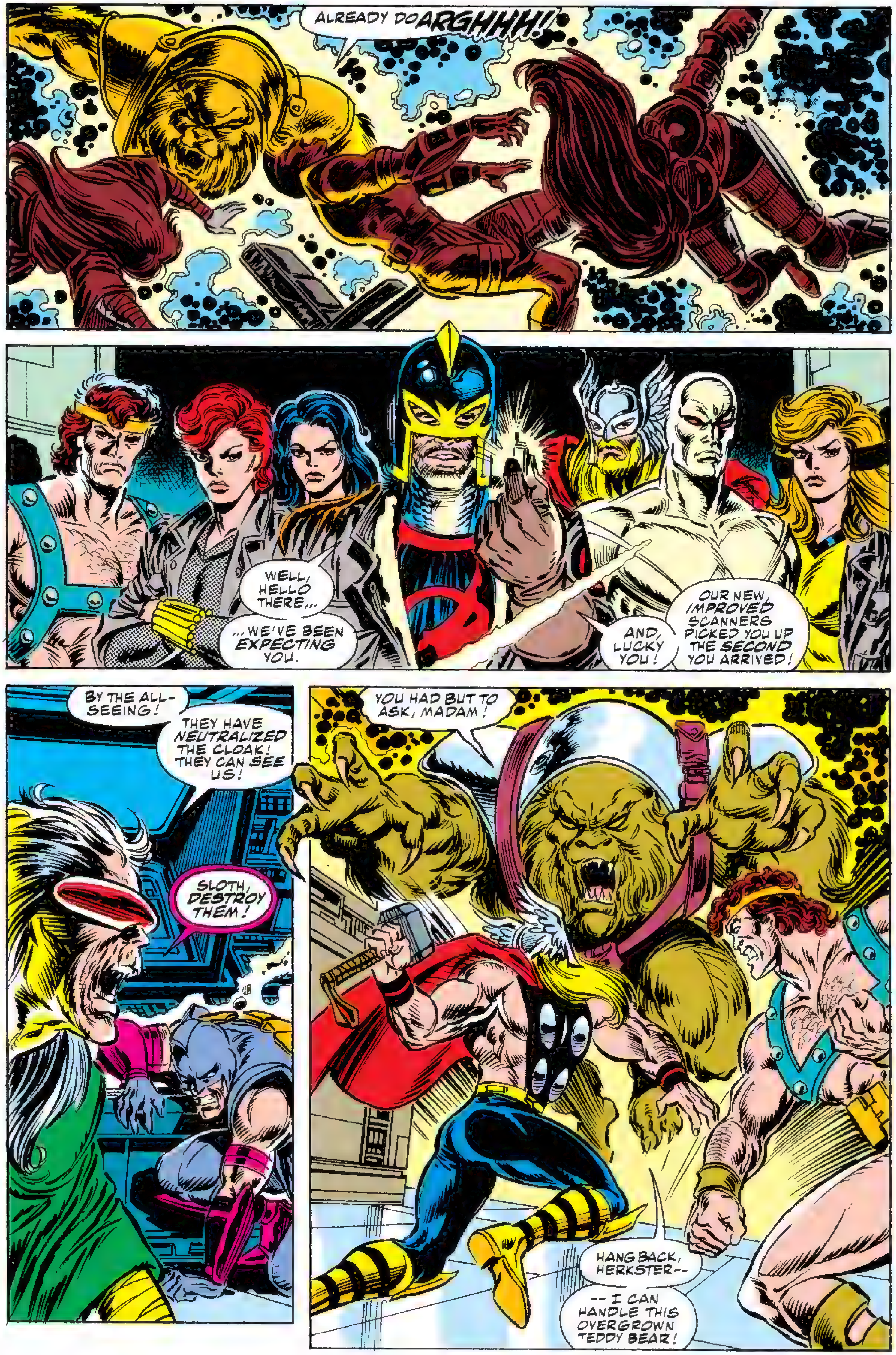
ELSEWHERE...
WHAT DO YOU SEE, PROCTOR?
TELL US!
BE SILENT, WOMAN!
I'M AFRAID THIS ONE WAS... MUCH DAMAGED BY THE TRANSITION, EVEN MORE SO THAN THE SWORDSMAN.
I'M ONLY SENSING USELESS, FRAGMENTED THOUGHTS.
ALL I CAN DO IS STABILIZE HIS BRAIN CHEMISTRY...
...SO THAT HE MIGHT SURVIVE HERE A WHILE LONGER.
BY THE ETERNAL--
--I SWEAR THIS GETS MORE DIFFICULT EACH TIME!
PROCTOR, YOU KNOW THIS IS ONLY A TEMPORARY MEASURE.
IF THIS COAL TIGER IS TO HELP US, HIS TEMPLATE IN THIS DIMENSION MUST BE ERADICATED.

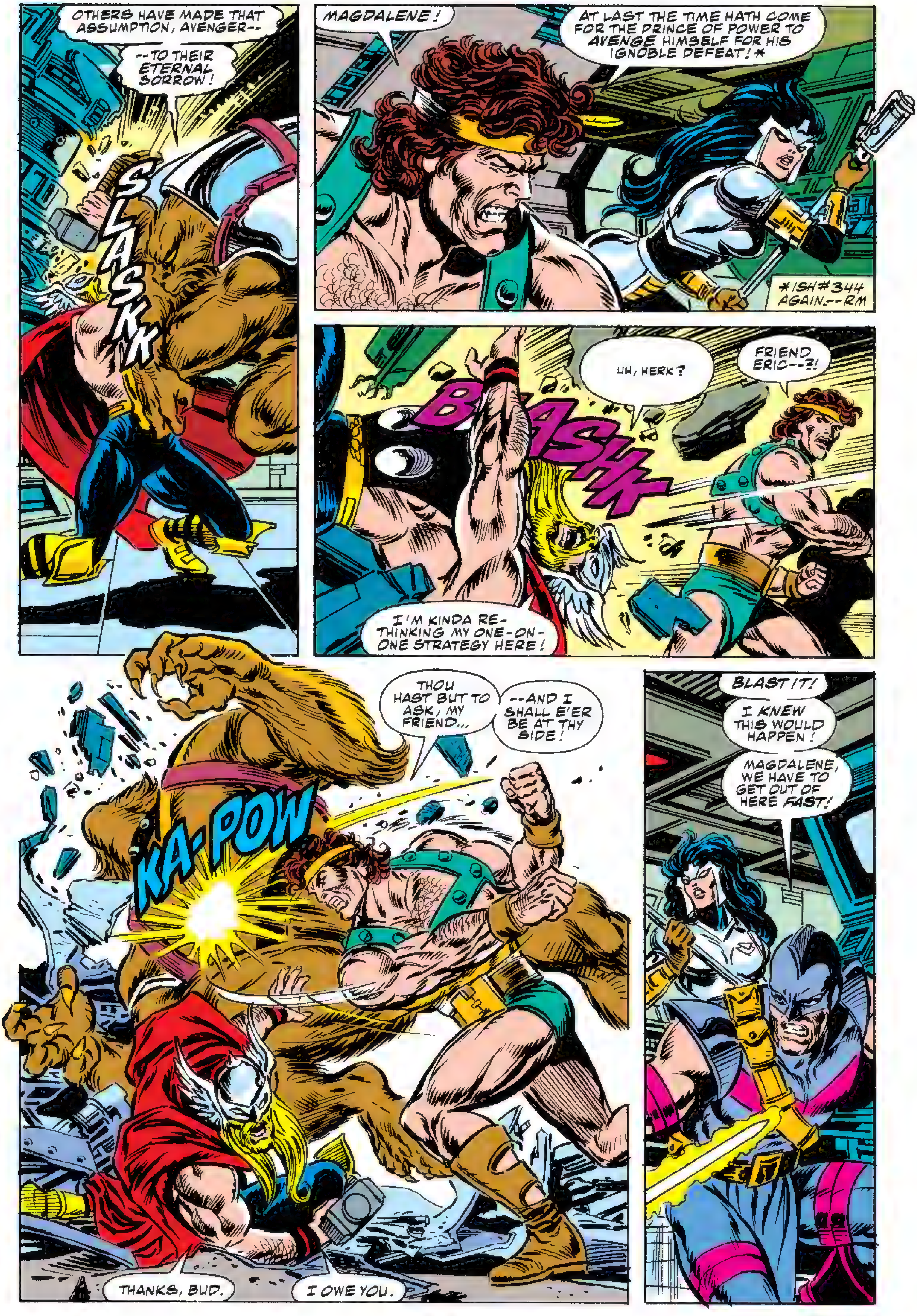

I *AM* AWARE OF THAT, CASSANDRA.
BUT SUCH A SEARCH COULD TAKE *MONTHS*.
NOT NECESSARILY.
UNLIKE *YOUR* MISS DARROW,* MAGDALENE, OUR COMATOSE FRIEND'S TEMPLATE SHOULD BE EASY TO LOCATE.
APPARENTLY, HE IS AN AVENGER IN *THIS* WORLD AS WELL.
*SEE AVENGERS #348.--RALF
HOW CAN YOU KNOW THIS?
IT IS *ENOUGH* THAT HE DOES, GIRL!
OUR NEXT STEP IS *CLEAR*. WE MUST ENTER THEIR MANSION ONCE MORE AND *LEARN* WHERE THIS AVENGER RESIDES FROM THEIR *OWN* RECORDS.
PROCTOR, I MUST PROTEST!
WE TEMPT THE FATES IN GOING TO THE AVENGERS' STRONGHOLD TOO OFTEN. THEY *KNOW* WE EXIST...
...IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY UNCOVER US!
YOU *MUST* PROTEST--?!
TELL ME, SWEET ONE, FROM WHERE COMES THIS NEW *INDEPENDENCE*?
DOES PHILLIP WHISPER SUCH THOUGHTS IN YOUR EAR AS THE DAWN RISES?
I TELL YOU, MAGDALENE, YOU HAVE *NO* CHOICE--
--YOU WILL *ALL* GO--*TONIGHT*!

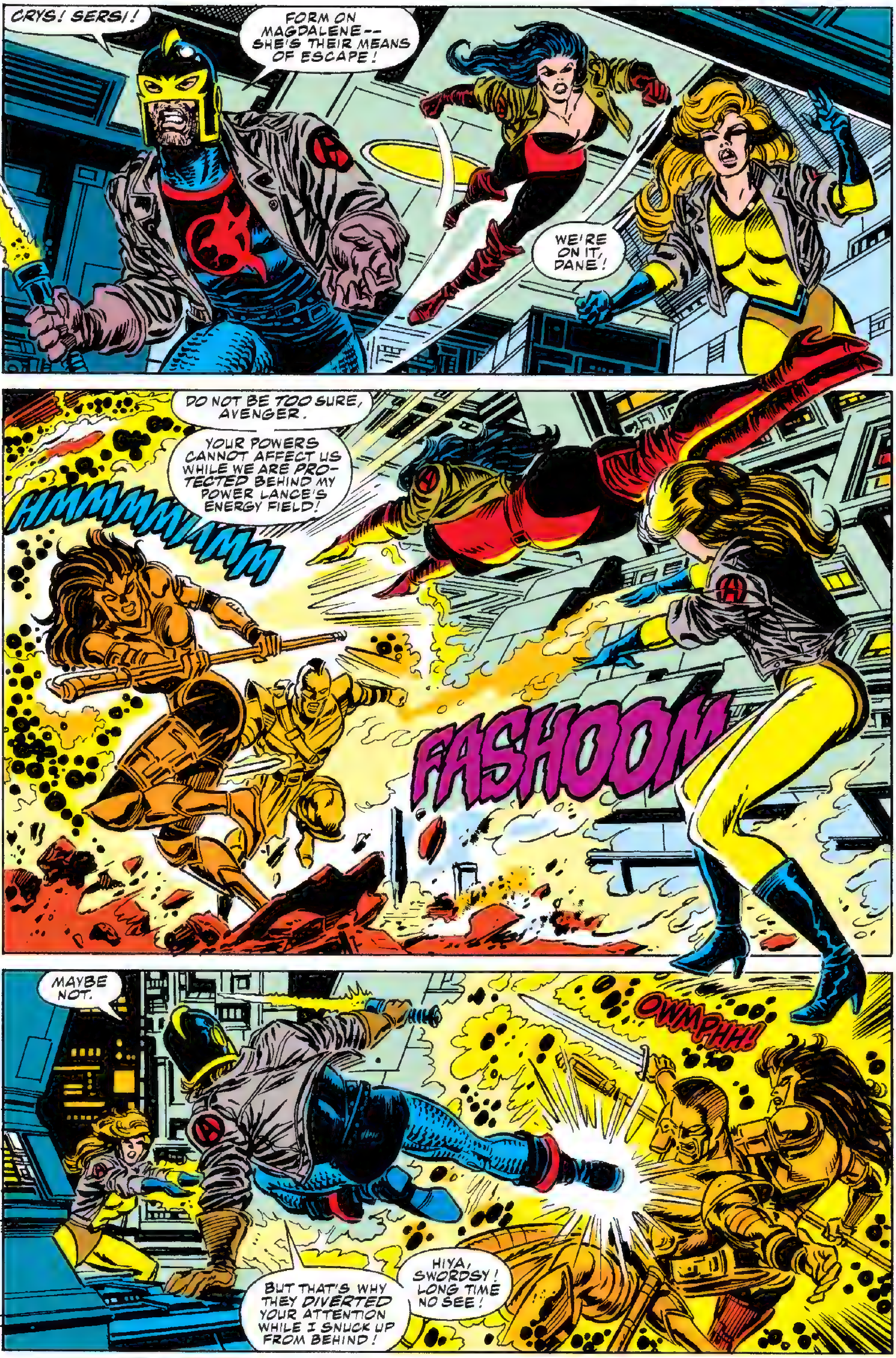

HMMMM
PERHAPS--
--PERHAPS NOT.
THERE YOU ARE, HERCULES!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO JOIN THE VISION AND ME IN THE GYM.
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO MISS OUR WORKOUTS, MY FRIEND.
MY APOLOGIES, NATASHA...
...BUT, IN TRUTH I FIND MYSELF IN A MOST UNUSUAL PREDICAMENT FOR WHICH I AM MOST UNPREPARED.
I DIDST INTEND TO ASK TAYLOR MADISON TO SUP WITH ME ONE NIGHT, BUT SUDDENLY, I DOTH FIND MYSELF PLAGUED WITH--
--DOUBT.
AND NE'ER, I ASSURE THEE, HATH I E'ER FELT THAT EMOTION REGARDING THE FAIRER SEX!
THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS WOMAN, A DIFFERENCE THAT INTRIGUES ME, BUT--
--WHAT IF SHE HATH NO INTEREST IN ME?
BEST THEN TO FORGET THIS INFATUATION, I SAY!
MEN!


LET ME SEE THAT NUMBER!
NATASHA!
SURELY THOU DOST NOT INTEND--
AND...
A DINNER PARTY NEXT THURSDAY, MADAME ROMANOFF?
I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. TO BE HONEST, I NEVER THOUGHT SUPER HEROES DID THIS SORT OF THING!
BUT I WOULD LOVE TO COME. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
WONDERFUL!
CRYSTAL, THOR AND HERCULES ESPECIALLY WILL BE DELIGHTED WHEN I TELL THEM!
COCKTAILS BEGIN AT SEVEN.
SEE HOW SIMPLE THAT WAS?
I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER TO BE ANGRY AT THEE FOR THY IMPUDENCE...
...OR BE DELIGHTED.
MAKE IT EASY ON THE BOTH OF US...
...BE DELIGHTED!
THAT IS NOT A SIDE WE OFTEN SEE OF YOU, NATASHA.
I'M RUSSIAN, VISION. I LOVE ROMANCE!
AND I HAVE TO MEET ANY WOMAN WHO CAN TURN HERCULES INTO A BASHFUL TEEN-AGER!

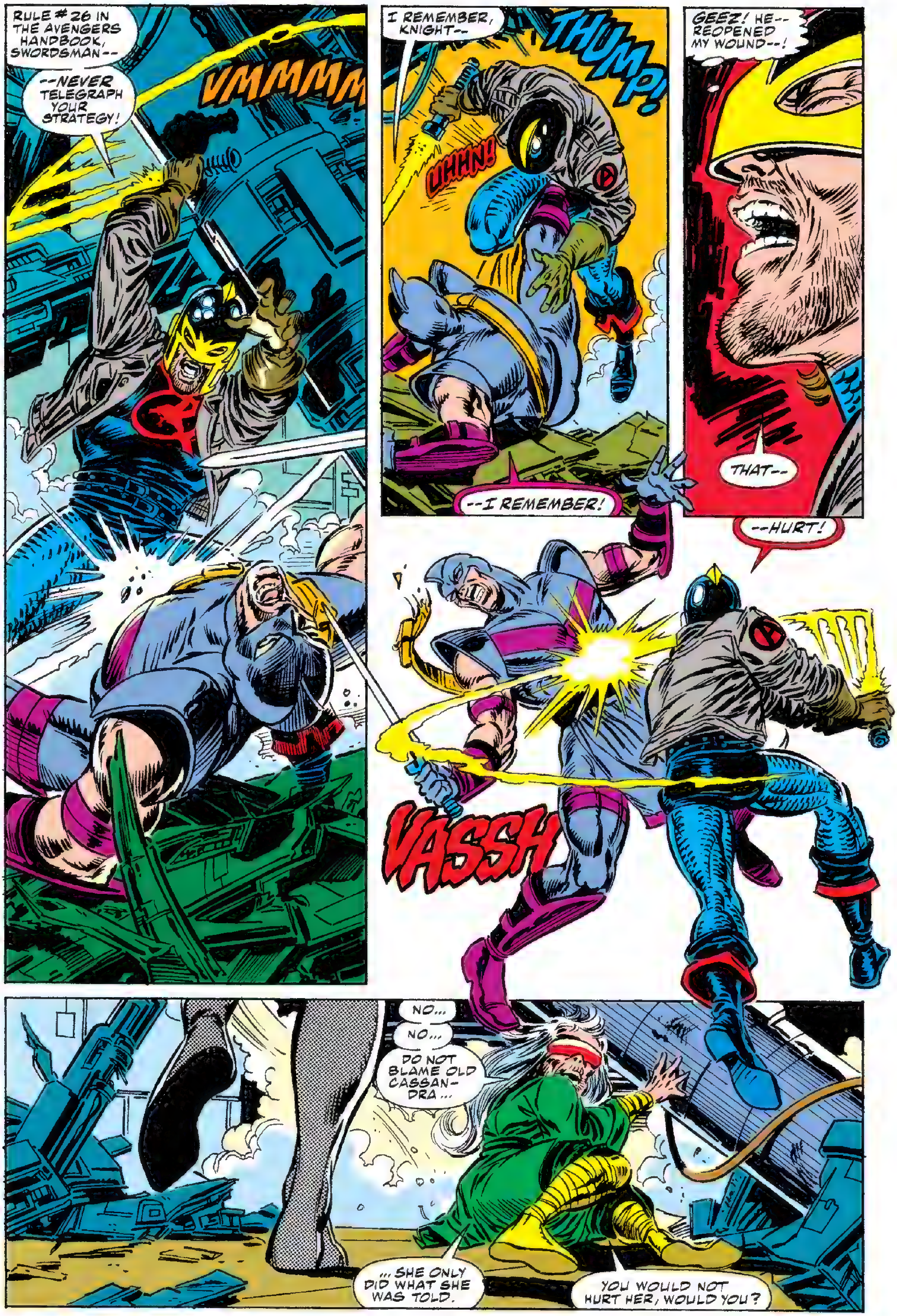

LATER...
...THE AVENGERS RECORDS ROOM...
YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN, MAGDALENE!
YOUR SKILL GROWS WITH EACH JUMP!
MY THANKS, SLOTH...
...BUT I STILL CANNOT SHAKE THE FEELING THAT THIS MISSION IS ILL-CONSIDERED.
HMMMMMMMMMM
...WHERE THE SILENCE OF THE DARK HOURS BEFORE DAWN...
...IS BROKEN BY THE SOFT MURMUR OF A NEWBORN RIFT IN SPACE.
ENOUGH WITH YOUR DIRE PREDICTIONS, CHILD, OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?
WE ARE CLOAKED. NEITHER AVENGERS NOR ANYONE ELSE CAN SEE OR HEAR US.
TWICE BEFORE WE HAVE BREACHED THEIR RAMPARTS.
FIRST TO INFILTRATE THEIR EMERGENCY BEACON, THEN TO SABOTAGE THEIR SKYCAR... WITH THEM NONE THE WISER.*
NOW, A MUCH MORE SERIOUS TASK LIES BEFORE US, AND, MAGDALENE, I ASSURE YOU, THEY WILL SLEEP LIKE BABES THROUGH IT ALL!
SWORDSMAN, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. ACCESS THEIR RECORDS.
*APPARENTLY BEFORE ISSUE #344 & 347.--RALF
IT'S SO ODD.
SO MUCH OF THIS SYSTEM IS FAMILIAR FROM MY DAYS AS AN AVENGER...
... BUT THERE ARE COMPONENTS I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
SHORTLY...
I FOUND NO MENTION OF A COAL TIGER, BUT I CROSS-INDEXED THE NAME T'CHALLA...
...AND CAME UP WITH A TON OF DATA!
OF COURSE. VARIATIONS ARE TO BE EXPECTED.
RETRIEVE EVERYTHING YOU CAN.

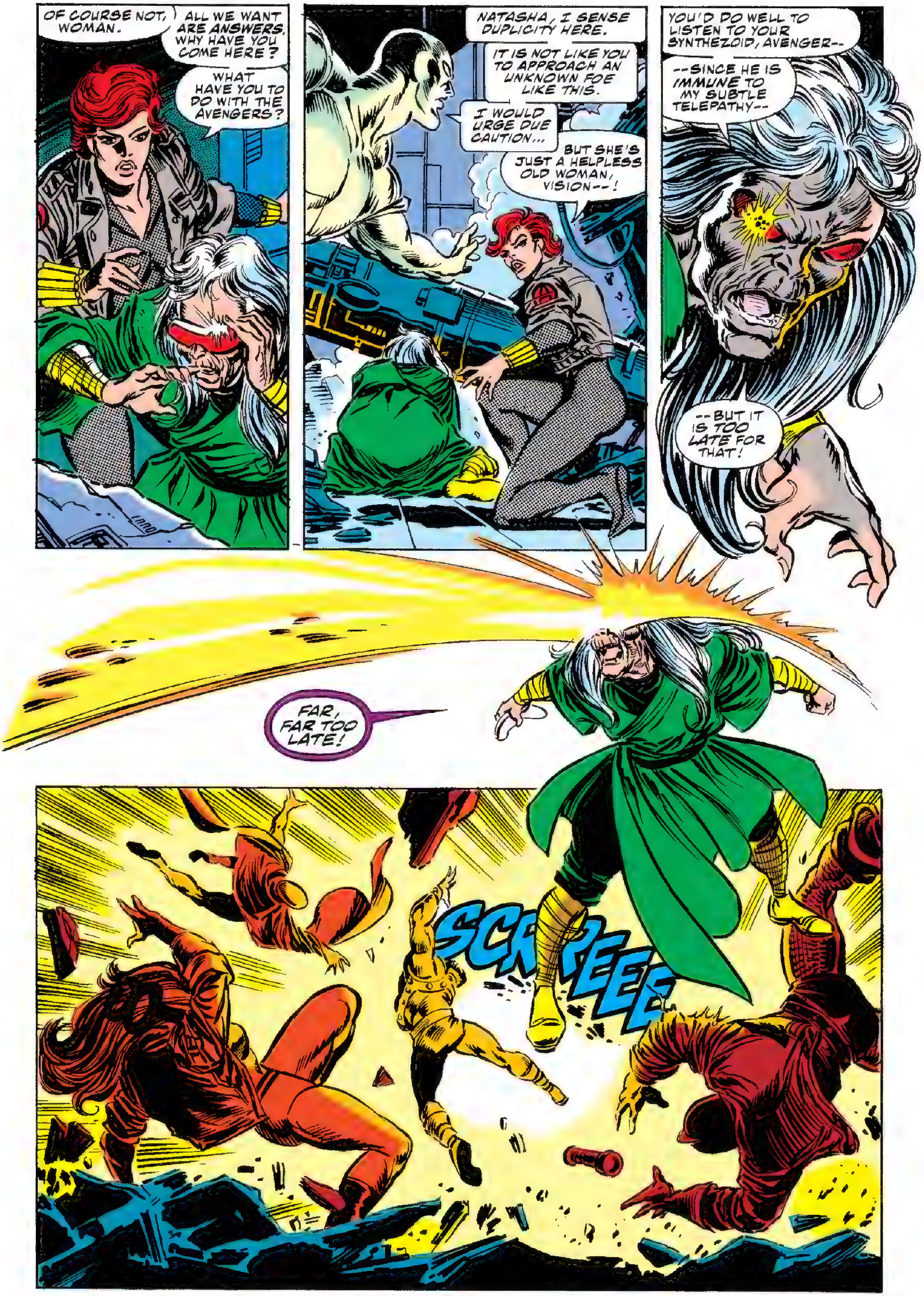

ALREADY DO ARGHHH!
WELL, HELLO THERE...
...WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
AND, LUCKY YOU!
OUR NEW, IMPROVED SCANNERS PICKED YOU UP THE SECOND YOU ARRIVED!
BY THE ALL-SEEING!
THEY HAVE NEUTRALIZED THE CLOAK! THEY CAN SEE US!
SLOTH, DESTROY THEM!
YOU HAD BUT TO ASK, MADAM!
HANG BACK, HERKSTER--
--I CAN HANDLE THIS OVERGROWN TEDDY BEAR!

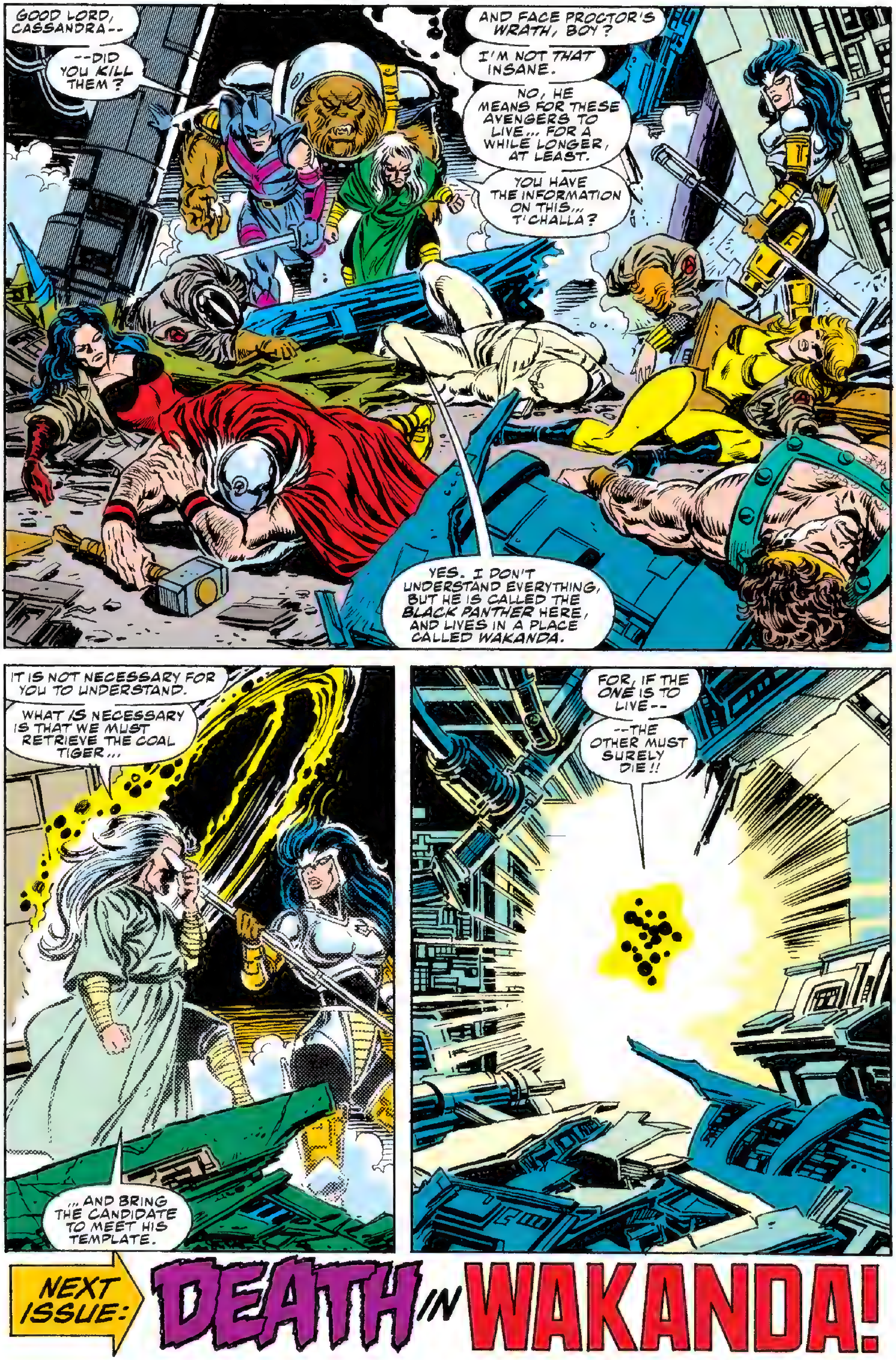

OTHERS HAVE MADE THAT ASSUMPTION, AVENGER--
--TO THEIR ETERNAL SORROW!
SLASKK
MAGDALENE!
AT LAST THE TIME HATH COME FOR THE PRINCE OF POWER TO AVENGE HIMSELF FOR HIS IGNOBLE DEFEAT! *
*ISH#344 AGAIN.--RM
UH, HERK?
FRIEND ERIC--?!
BLASHK
I'M KINDA RE-THINKING MY ONE-ON-ONE STRATEGY HERE!
THOU HAST BUT TO ASK, MY FRIEND...
--AND I SHALL E'ER BE AT THY SIDE!
KA-POW
THANKS, BUD.
I OWE YOU.
BLAST IT!
I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN!
MAGDALENE, WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE FAST!

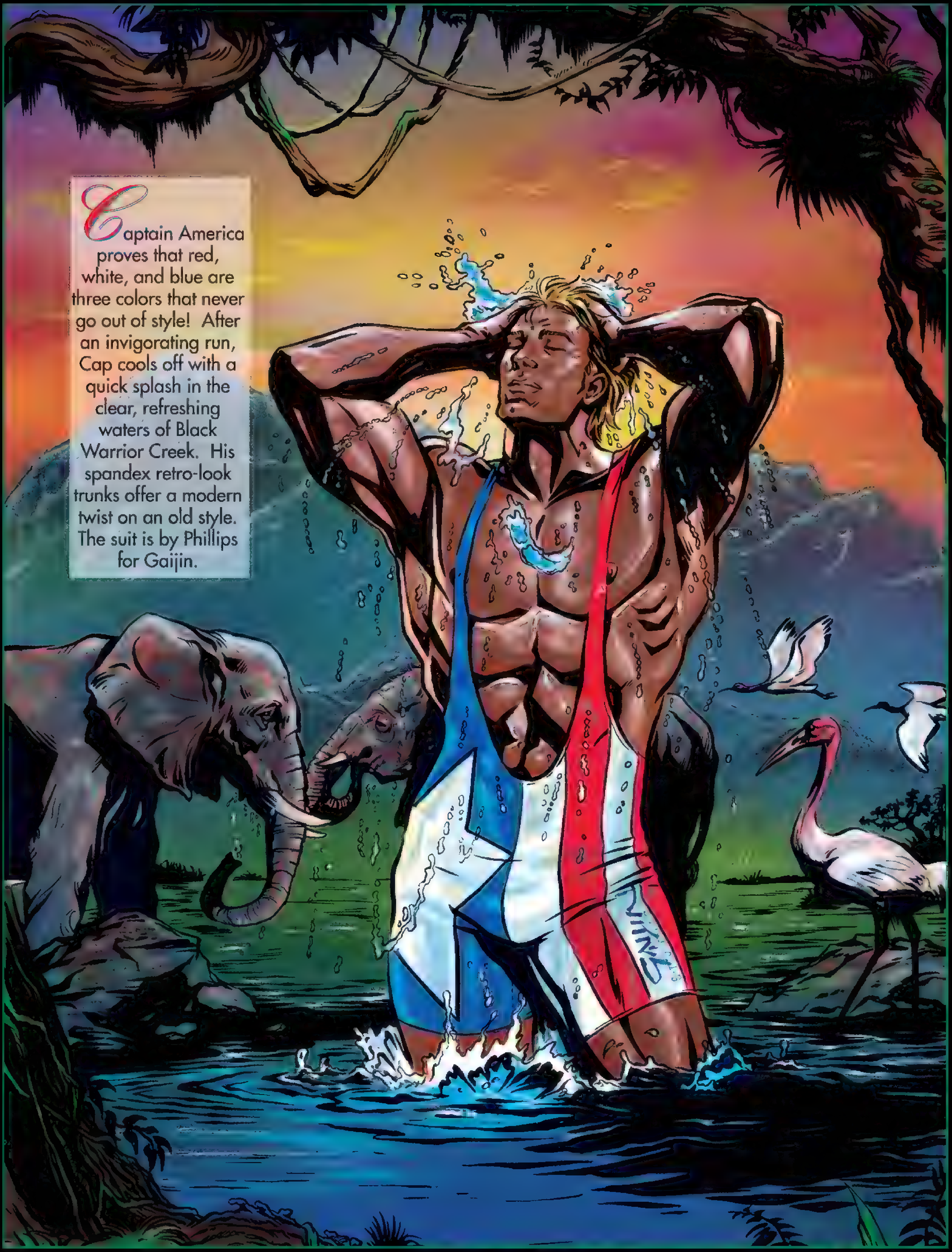

CRYS! SERSI!
FORM ON MAGDALENE-- SHE'S THEIR MEANS OF ESCAPE!
WE'RE ON IT, DANE!
DO NOT BE *TOO* SURE, AVENGER.
YOUR POWERS CANNOT AFFECT US WHILE WE ARE *PRO-TECTED* BEHIND MY POWER LANCE'S ENERGY FIELD!
HMMMMMMMMM
FASHOOM
MAYBE NOT.
OWMPHH!
BUT THAT'S WHY THEY *DIVERTED* YOUR ATTENTION WHILE I SNUCK UP FROM BEHIND!
HIYA, SWORDSY! LONG TIME NO SEE!

YOU THINK YOURSELF CLEVER, EH, KNIGHT?
TELL ME--HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOUR DECOYS PAY FOR YOUR SMUGNESS?
VMMMMMM
UHHH!
KARASH!
CRYSTAL!
SERS! ARE YOU--?!
I'M FINE, DANE.
BUT THIS POWER LANCE IS A BIT OF A NUISANCE...
...I THINK IT'S TIME IT WAS TRANSMUTED INTO A LUMP OF CLAY...
...OR SOMETHING EQUALLY HARMLESS!
TRY, AVENGER--
--AND LEARN THAT BOTH MY WEAPON AND I ARE MUCH MORE FORMIDABLE THAN YOU THINK!
WHA--?! IT'S NOT CHANGING?!
FEEDBACK... ARRG!
I DID NOT WANT THIS...
...BUT DO NOT THINK I'VE FORGOTTEN THAT I OWE YOU FROM OUR LAST ENCOUNTER, KNIGHT...*
...AND I ALWAYS PAY MY DEBTS.
*THE AFOREMENTIONED #344. --REDUNDANT RALF


RULE #26 IN THE AVENGERS HANDBOOK, SWORDSMAN--
--NEVER TELEGRAPH YOUR STRATEGY!
VMMMM
I REMEMBER, KNIGHT--
THUMP!
UHHN!
--I REMEMBER!
GEEZ! HE--REOPENED MY WOUND--!
THAT--
--HURT!
VASSH
NO...
NO...
DO NOT BLAME OLD CASSANDRA...
...SHE ONLY DID WHAT SHE WAS TOLD.
YOU WOULD NOT HURT HER, WOULD YOU?


OF COURSE NOT, WOMAN.
ALL WE WANT ARE *ANSWERS.* WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?
WHAT HAVE YOU TO DO WITH THE AVENGERS?
NATASHA, I SENSE DUPLICITY HERE.
IT IS NOT LIKE YOU TO APPROACH AN UNKNOWN FOE LIKE THIS.
I WOULD URGE DUE CAUTION...
BUT SHE'S JUST A HELPLESS OLD WOMAN, VISION--!
YOU'D DO WELL TO LISTEN TO YOUR SYNTHEZOID, AVENGER--
--SINCE HE IS *IMMUNE* TO MY SUBTLE TELEPATHY--
--BUT IT IS *TOO LATE* FOR THAT!
FAR, FAR TOO LATE!
SCREEEE


GOOD LORD, CASSANDRA--
--DID YOU *KILL* THEM?
AND FACE PROCTOR'S *WRATH*, BOY?
I'M NOT *THAT* INSANE.
NO, HE MEANS FOR THESE AVENGERS TO LIVE... FOR A WHILE LONGER, AT LEAST.
YOU HAVE THE INFORMATION ON THIS... T'CHALLA?
YES. I DON'T UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING, BUT HE IS CALLED THE *BLACK PANTHER* HERE, AND LIVES IN A PLACE CALLED *WAKANDA*.
IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND.
WHAT *IS* NECESSARY IS THAT WE MUST RETRIEVE THE COAL TIGER...
...AND BRING THE CANDIDATE TO MEET HIS TEMPLATE.
FOR, IF THE *ONE* IS TO LIVE--
--THE OTHER MUST SURELY DIE!!
NEXT ISSUE:
DEATH IN WAKANDA!

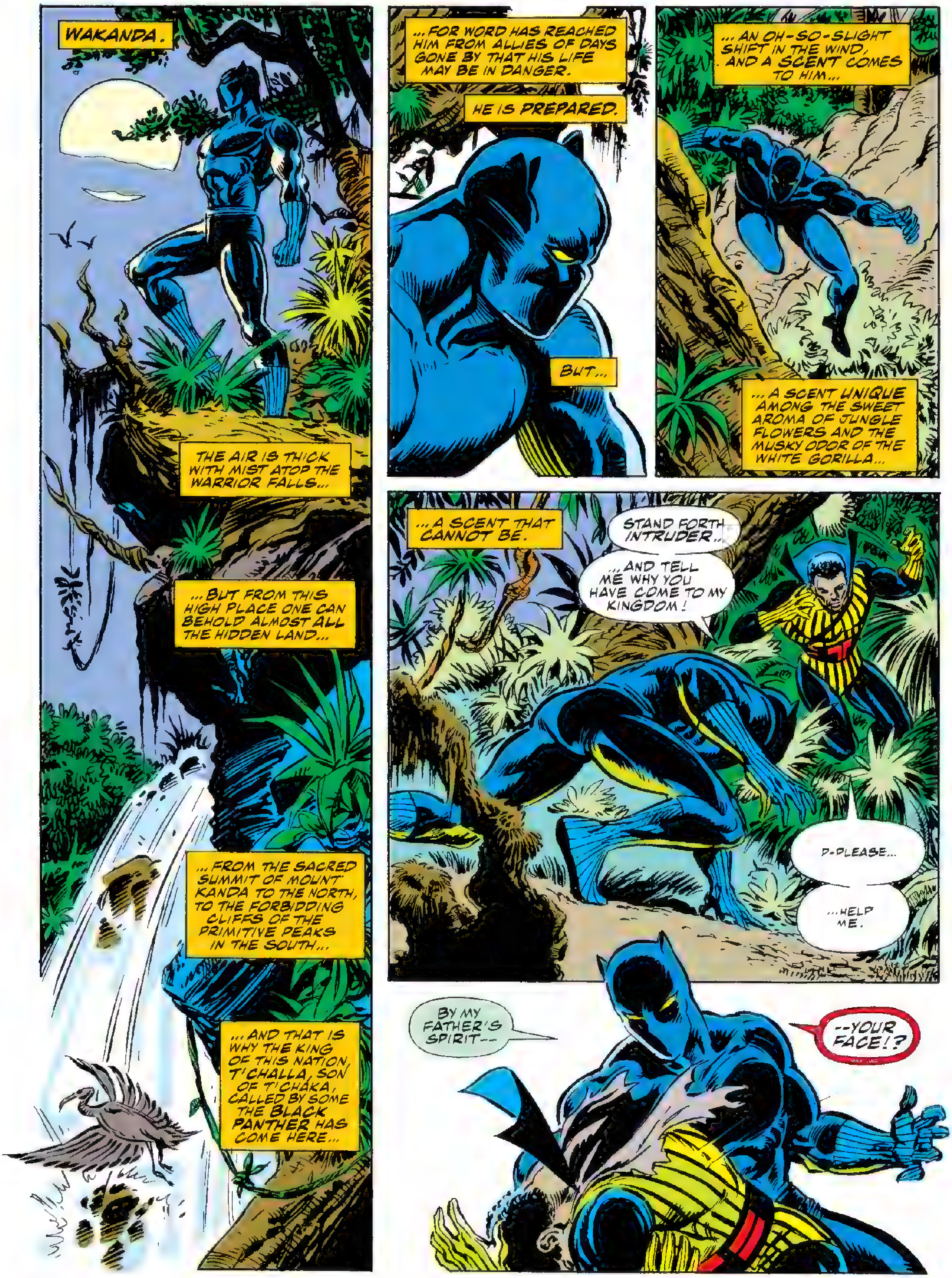


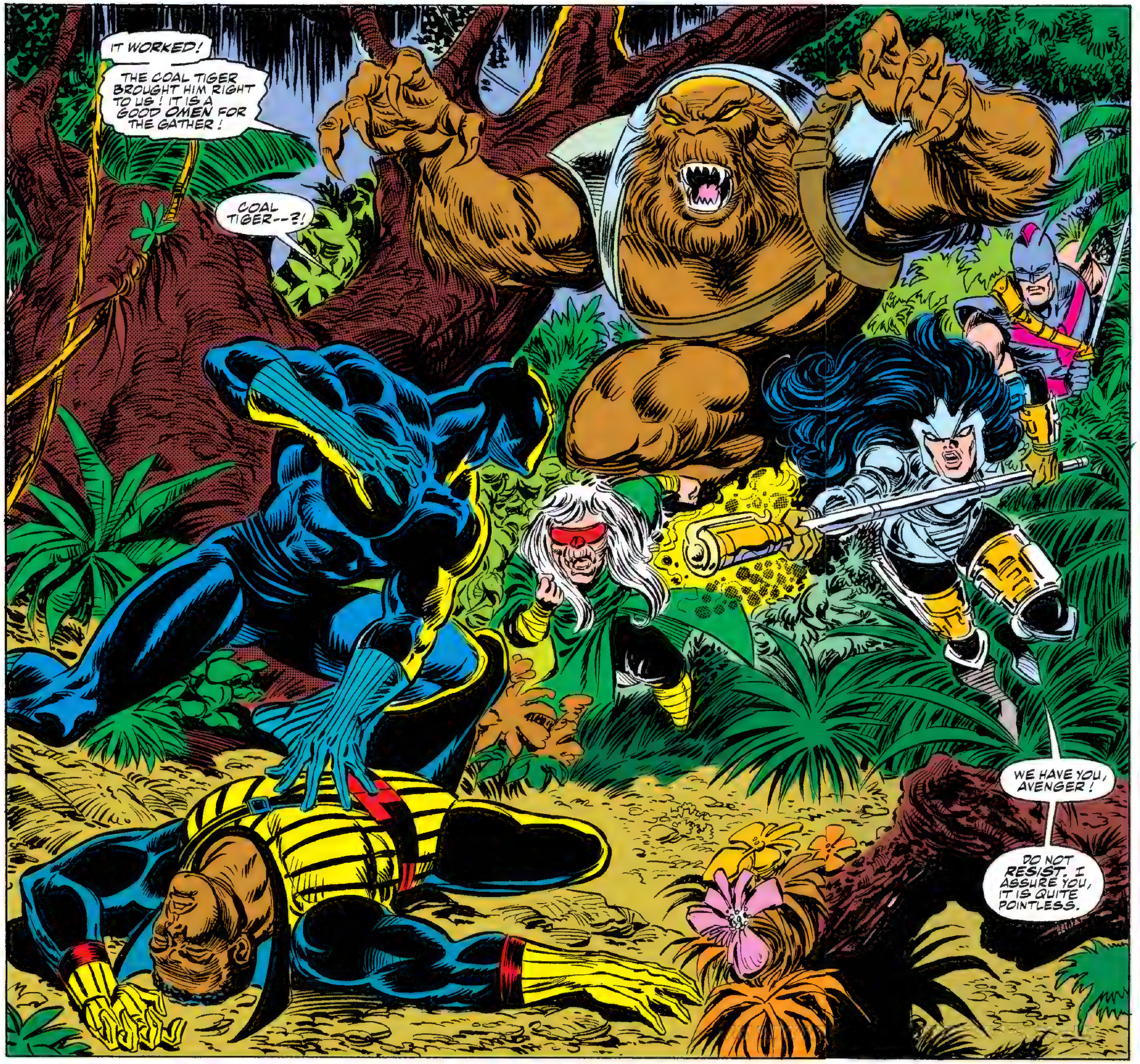
Captain America proves that red, white, and blue are three colors that never go out of style! After an invigorating run, Cap cools off with a quick splash in the clear, refreshing waters of Black Warrior Creek. His spandex retro-look trunks offer a modern twist on an old style. The suit is by Phillips for Gaijin.

MARVEL SWIMSUIT SPECIAL #1 **PINUP BY JOE PHILLIPS**

MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN/UK 70p
356
NOV
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
02458
© 1992 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
DEATH IN A GATHERING PLACE

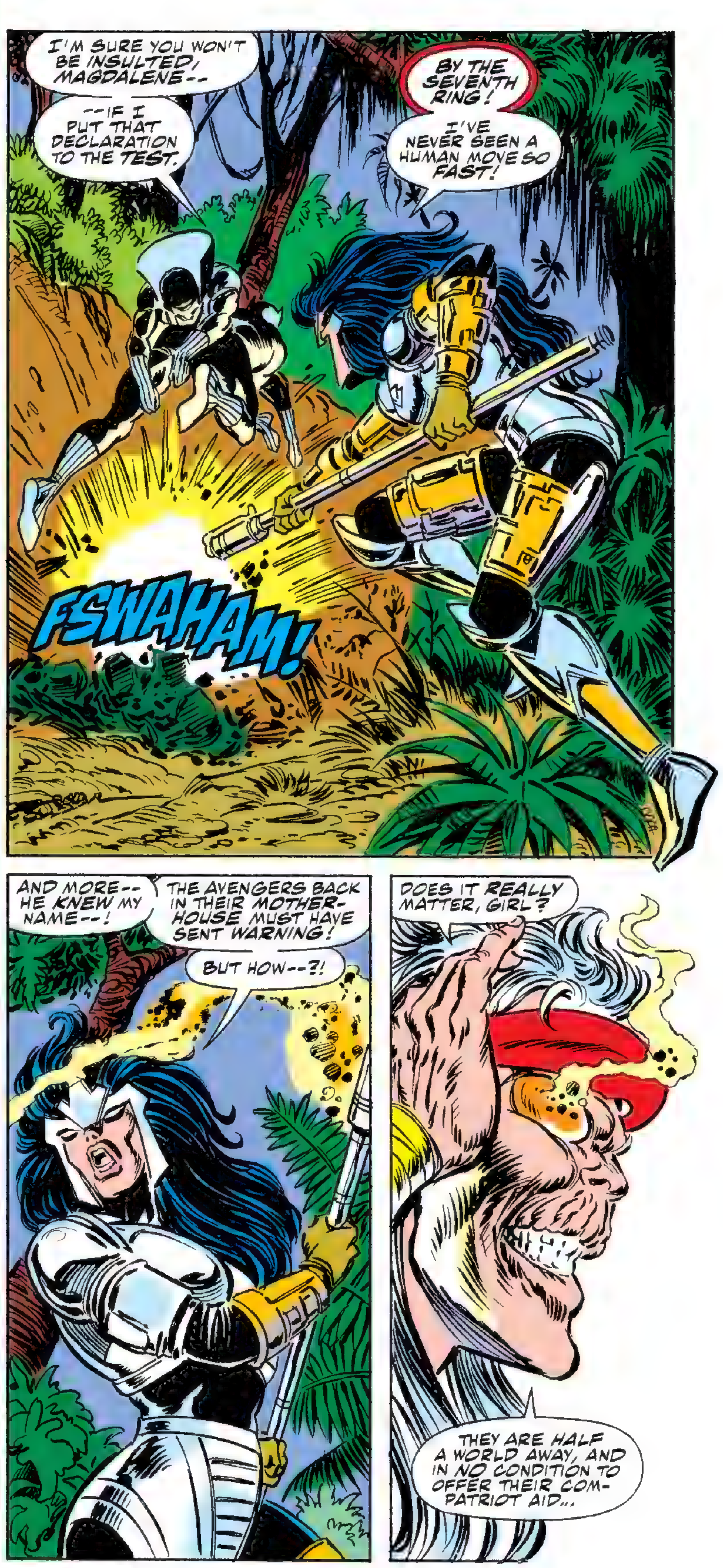
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

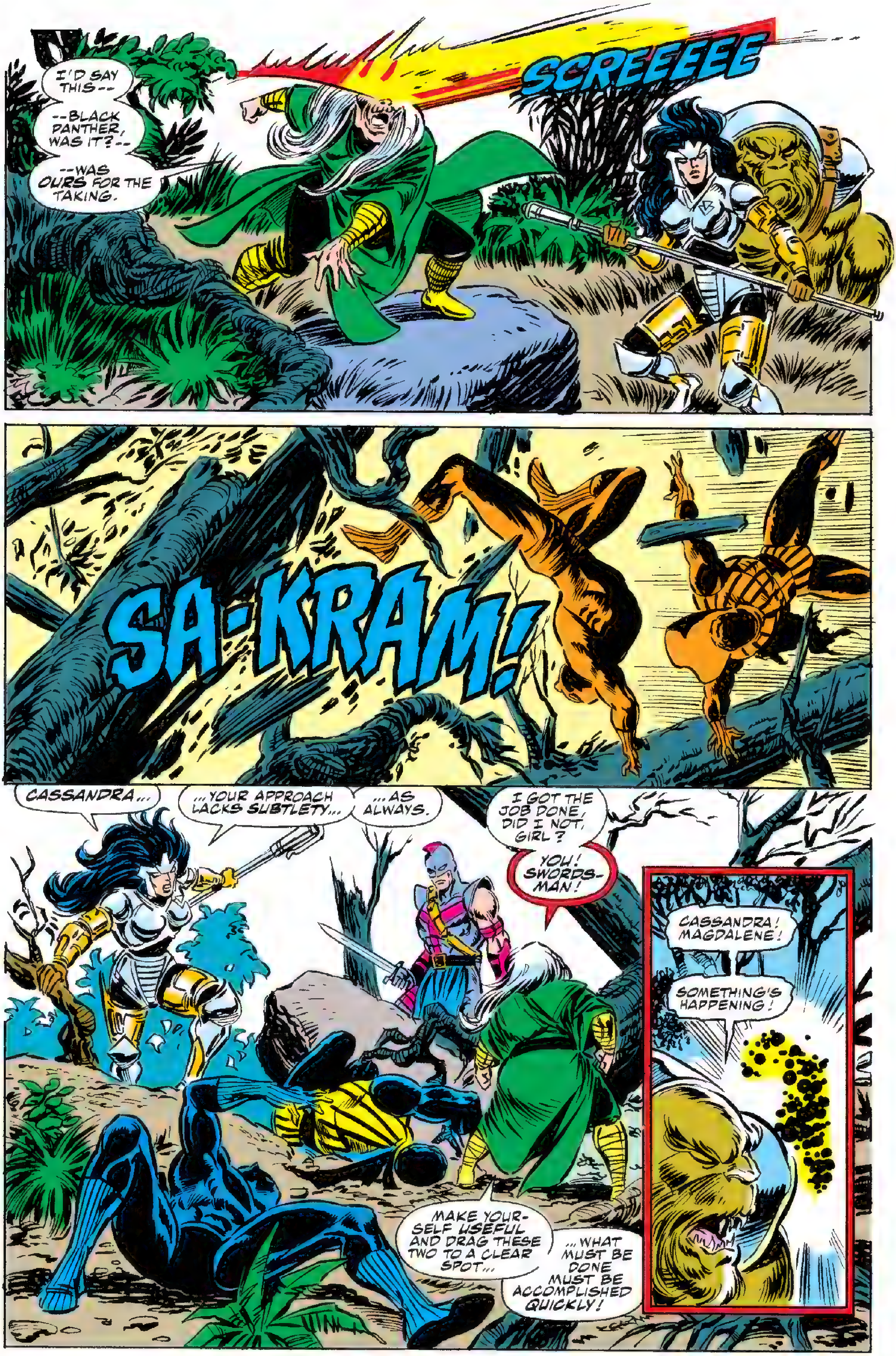

WAKANDA.
THE AIR IS THICK WITH MIST ATOP THE WARRIOR FALLS...
...BUT FROM THIS HIGH PLACE ONE CAN BEHOLD ALMOST ALL THE HIDDEN LAND...
...FROM THE SACRED SUMMIT OF MOUNT KANDA TO THE NORTH, TO THE FORBIDDING CLIFFS OF THE PRIMITIVE PEAKS IN THE SOUTH...
...AND THAT IS WHY THE KING OF THIS NATION, T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA, CALLED BY SOME THE BLACK PANTHER HAS COME HERE...
...FOR WORD HAS REACHED HIM FROM ALLIES OF DAYS GONE BY THAT HIS LIFE MAY BE IN DANGER.
HE IS PREPARED.
BUT...
...AN OH-SO-SLIGHT SHIFT IN THE WIND, AND A SCENT COMES TO HIM...
...A SCENT UNIQUE AMONG THE SWEET AROMA OF JUNGLE FLOWERS AND THE MUSKY ODOR OF THE WHITE GORILLA...
...A SCENT THAT CANNOT BE.
STAND FORTH INTRUDER...
...AND TELL ME WHY YOU HAVE COME TO MY KINGDOM!
P-PLEASE...
...HELP ME.
BY MY FATHER'S SPIRIT--
--YOUR FACE!?

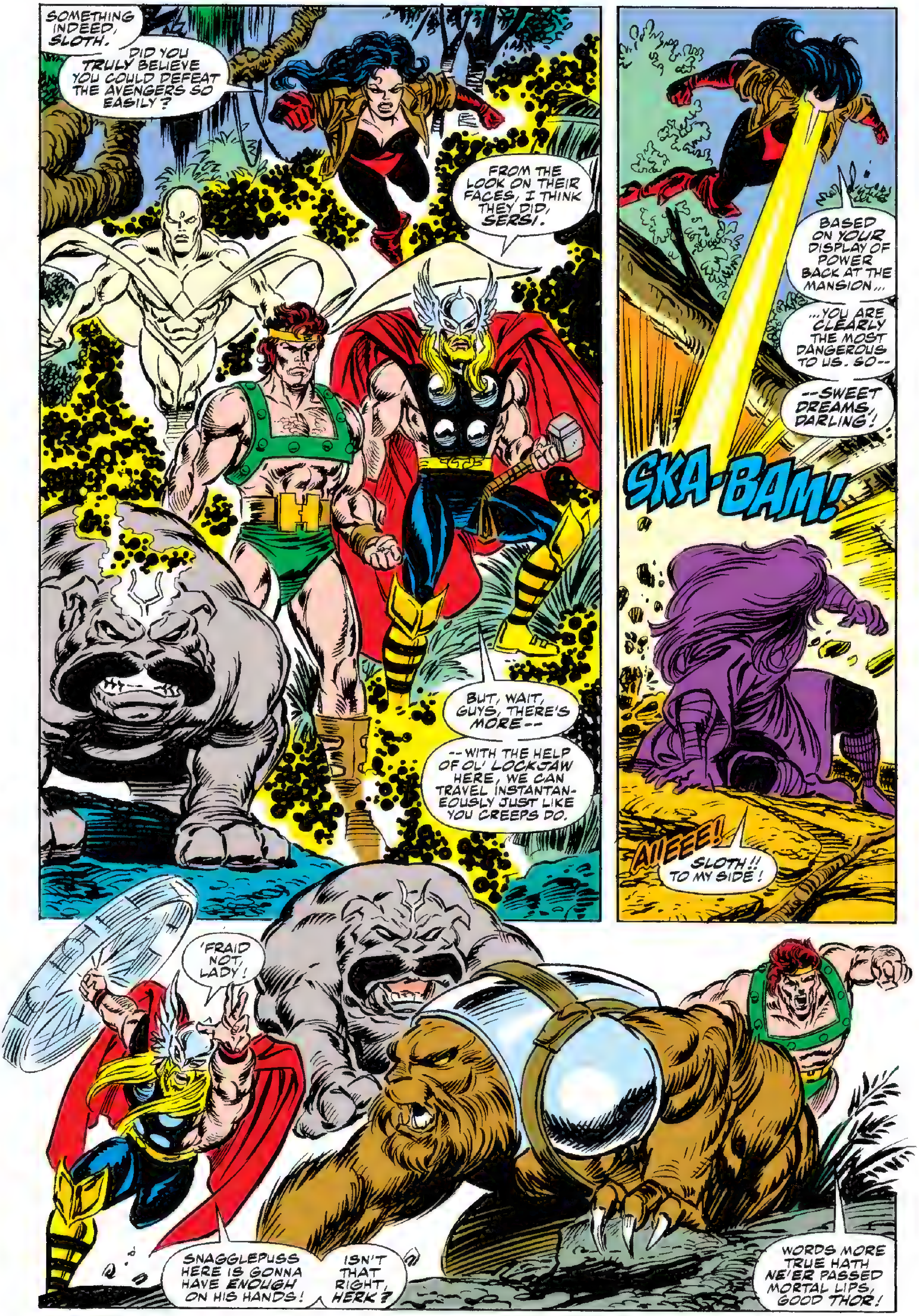

IT WORKED!
THE COAL TIGER BROUGHT HIM RIGHT TO US! IT IS A GOOD OMEN FOR THE GATHER!
COAL TIGER--?!
WE HAVE YOU, AVENGER!
DO NOT RESIST. I ASSURE YOU, IT IS QUITE POINTLESS.

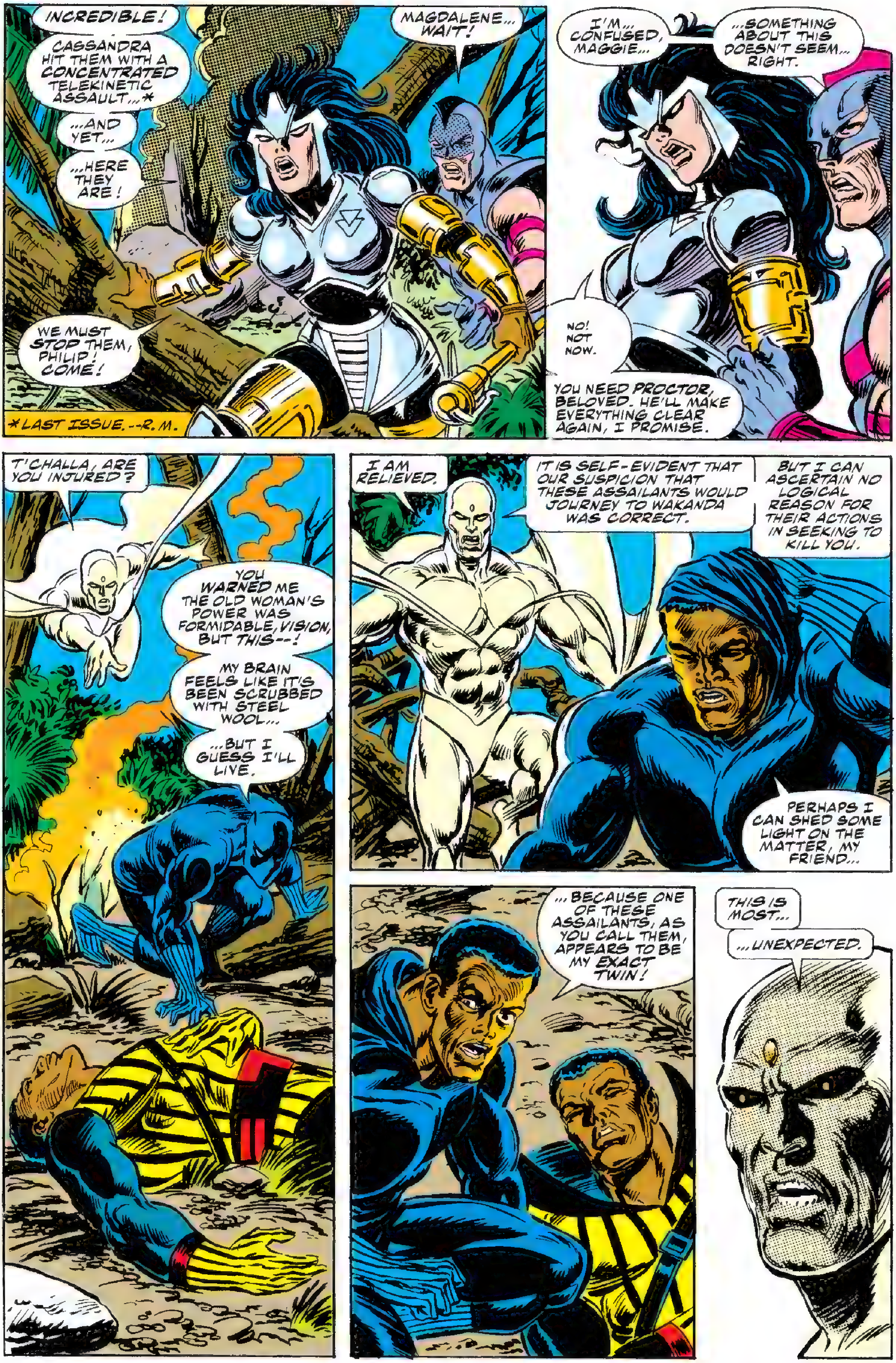
DEATH IN A GATHERING PLACE

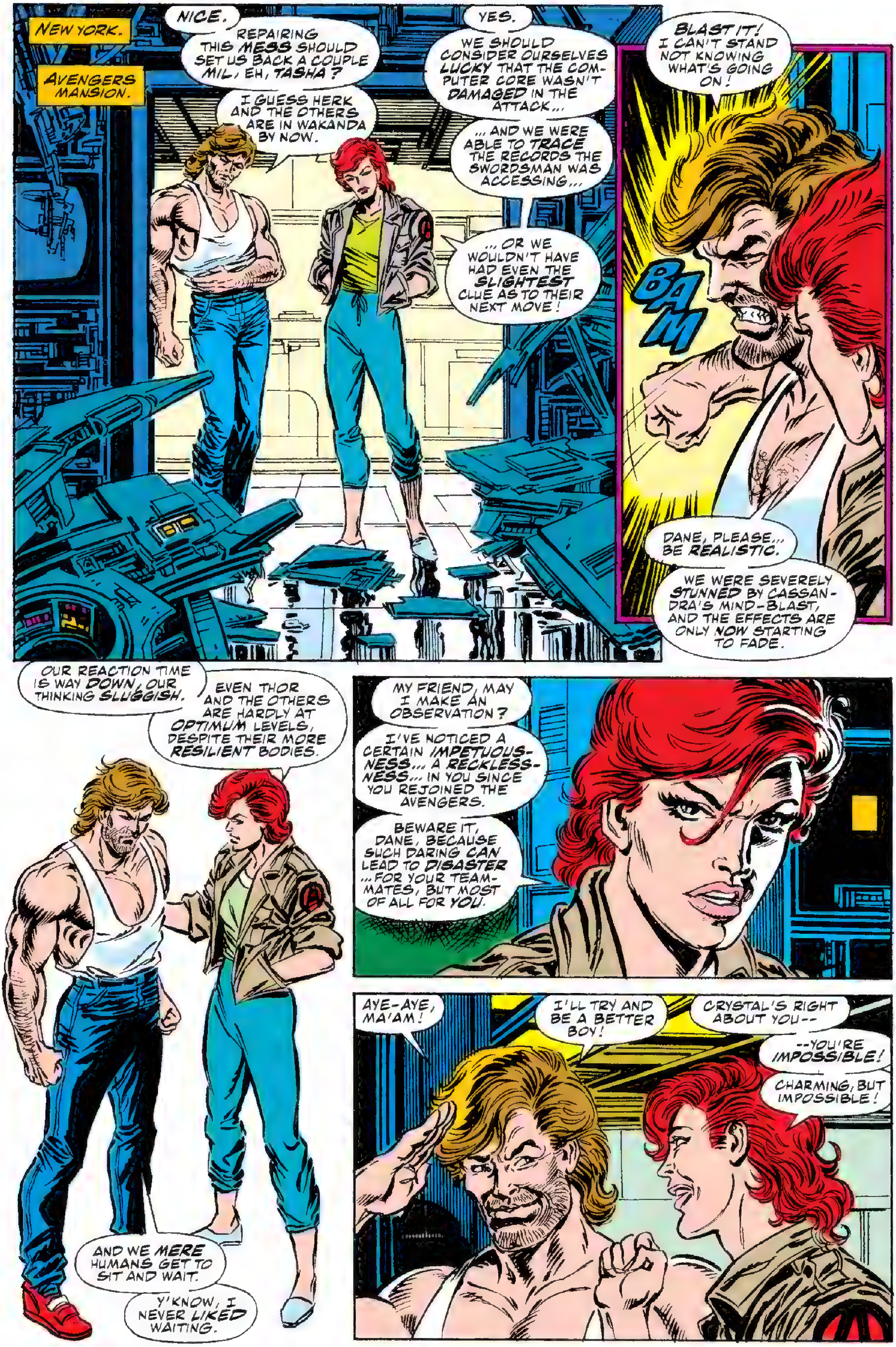
BOB HARRAS - WRITER
STEVE EPTING - PENCILER
TOM PALMER - INKER & COLORIST
BILL OAKLEY - LETTERER
RALPH MACCHIO - EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO - EDITOR IN CHIEF

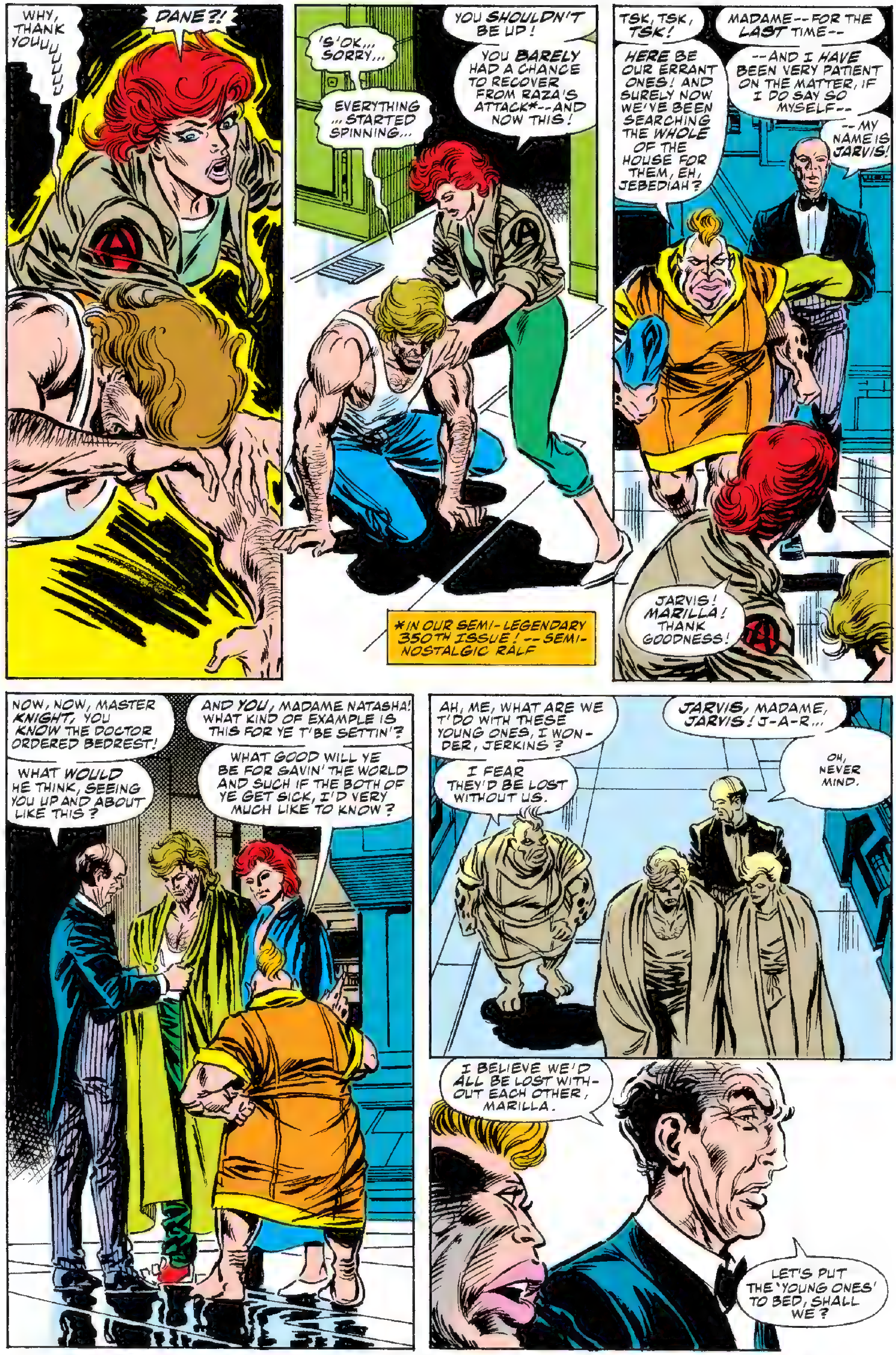

I'M SURE YOU WON'T BE INSULTED, MAGDALENE--
--IF I PUT THAT DECLARATION TO THE TEST.
BY THE SEVENTH RING!
I'VE NEVER SEEN A HUMAN MOVE SO FAST!
FSWAHAM!
AND MORE--HE KNEW MY NAME--!
THE AVENGERS BACK IN THEIR MOTHER-HOUSE MUST HAVE SENT WARNING!
BUT HOW--?!
DOES IT REALLY MATTER, GIRL?
THEY ARE HALF A WORLD AWAY, AND IN NO CONDITION TO OFFER THEIR COMPATRIOT AID...

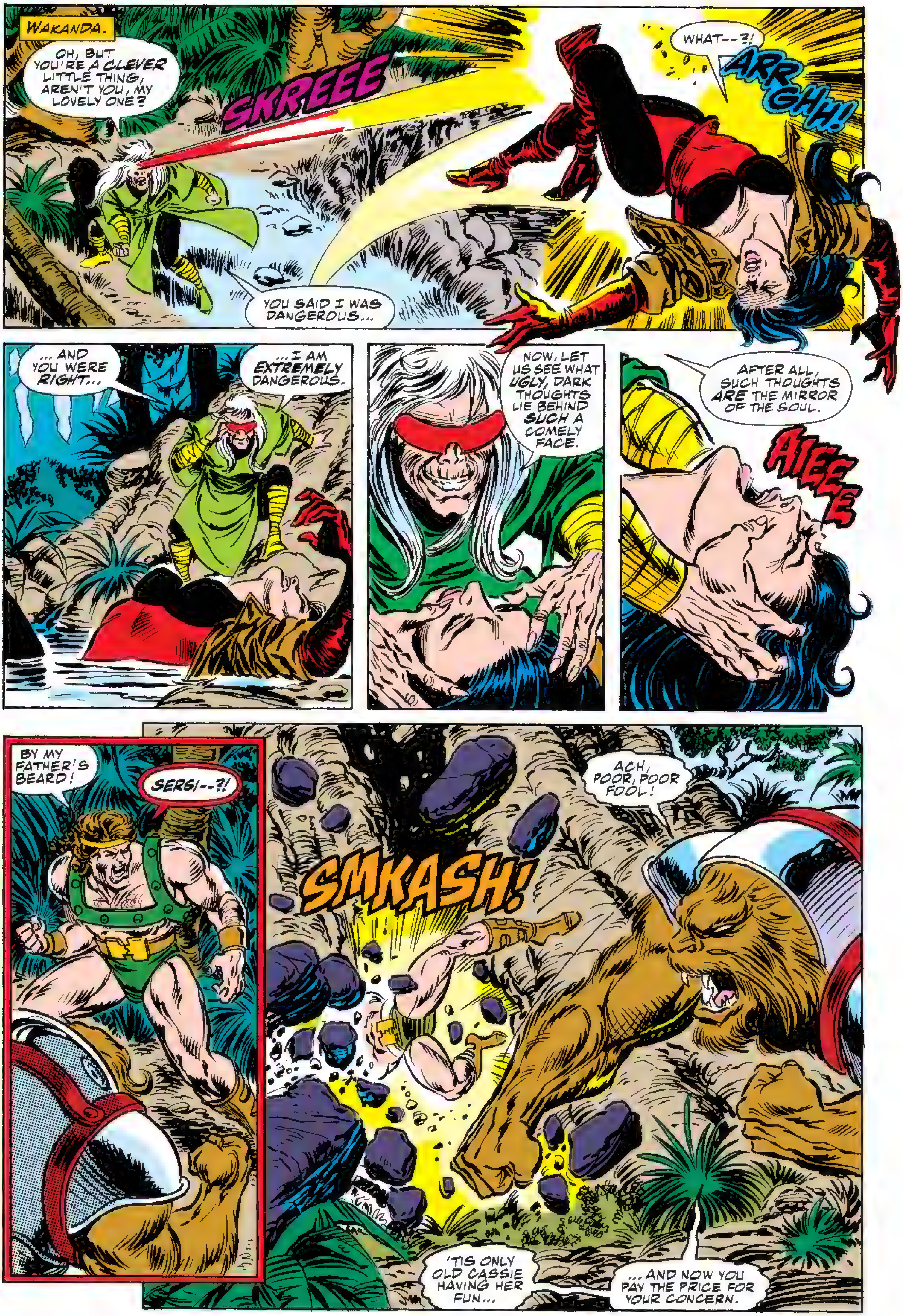

I'D SAY THIS--
--BLACK PANTHER, WAS IT?--
--WAS OURS FOR THE TAKING.
SCREEEEEE
SA-KRAM!
CASSANDRA...
...YOUR APPROACH LACKS SUBTLETY...
...AS ALWAYS.
I GOT THE JOB DONE, DID I NOT, GIRL?
YOU! SWORDSMAN!
CASSANDRA! MAGDALENE!
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING!
MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL AND DRAG THESE TWO TO A CLEAR SPOT...
...WHAT MUST BE DONE MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED QUICKLY!

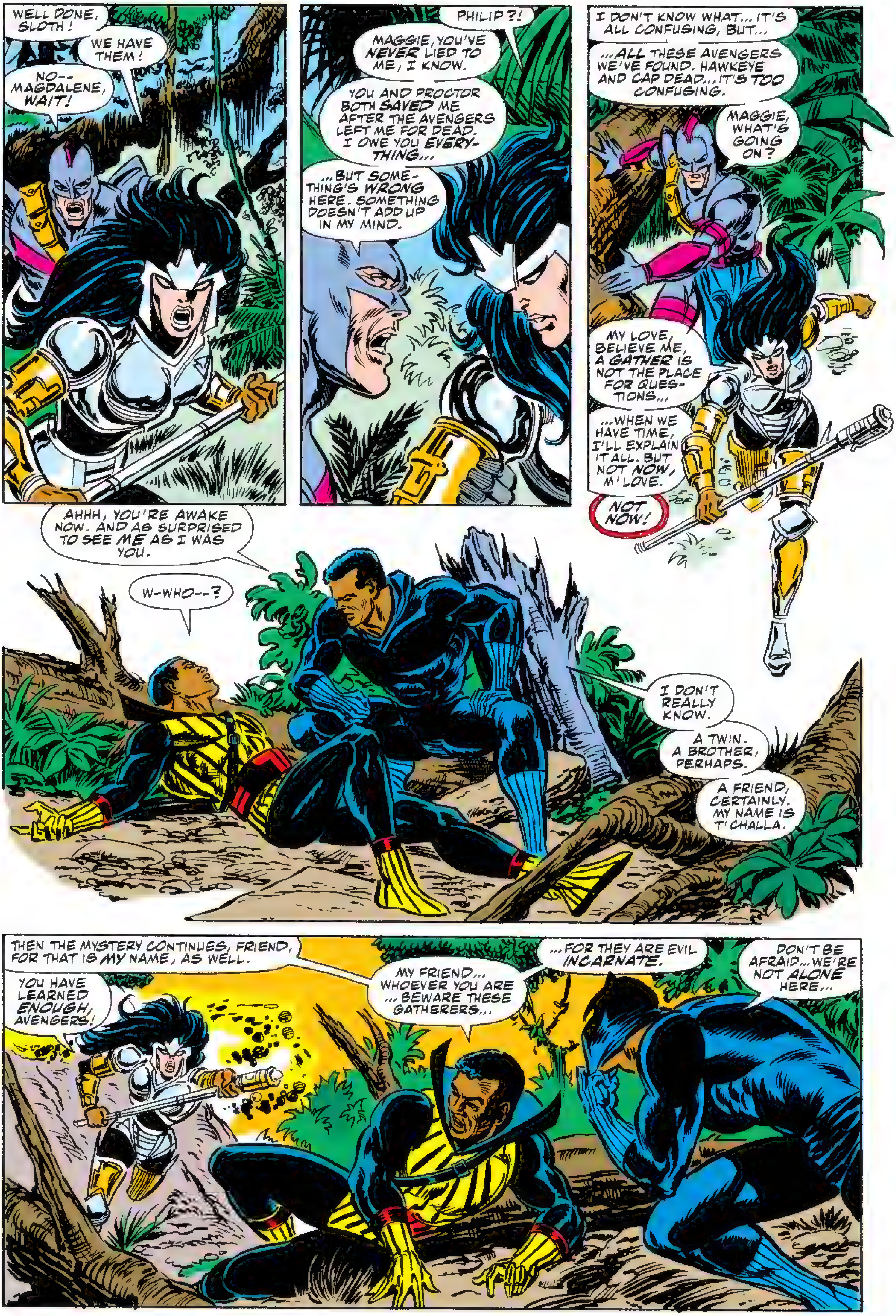

SOMETHING INDEED, SLOTH.
DID YOU TRULY BELIEVE YOU COULD DEFEAT THE AVENGERS SO EASILY?
FROM THE LOOK ON THEIR FACES, I THINK THEY DID, SERSI.
BUT, WAIT, GUYS, THERE'S MORE--
--WITH THE HELP OF OL' LOCKJAW HERE, WE CAN TRAVEL INSTANTANEOUSLY JUST LIKE YOU CREEPS DO.
BASED ON YOUR DISPLAY OF POWER BACK AT THE MANSION...
...YOU ARE CLEARLY THE MOST DANGEROUS TO US. SO--
--SWEET DREAMS, DARLING!
SKA-BAM!
AIIEEE!
SLOTH!! TO MY SIDE!
'FRAID NOT, LADY!
SNAGGLEPUSS HERE IS GONNA HAVE ENOUGH ON HIS HANDS!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, HERK?
WORDS MORE TRUE HATH NE'ER PASSED MORTAL LIPS, GOOD THOR!

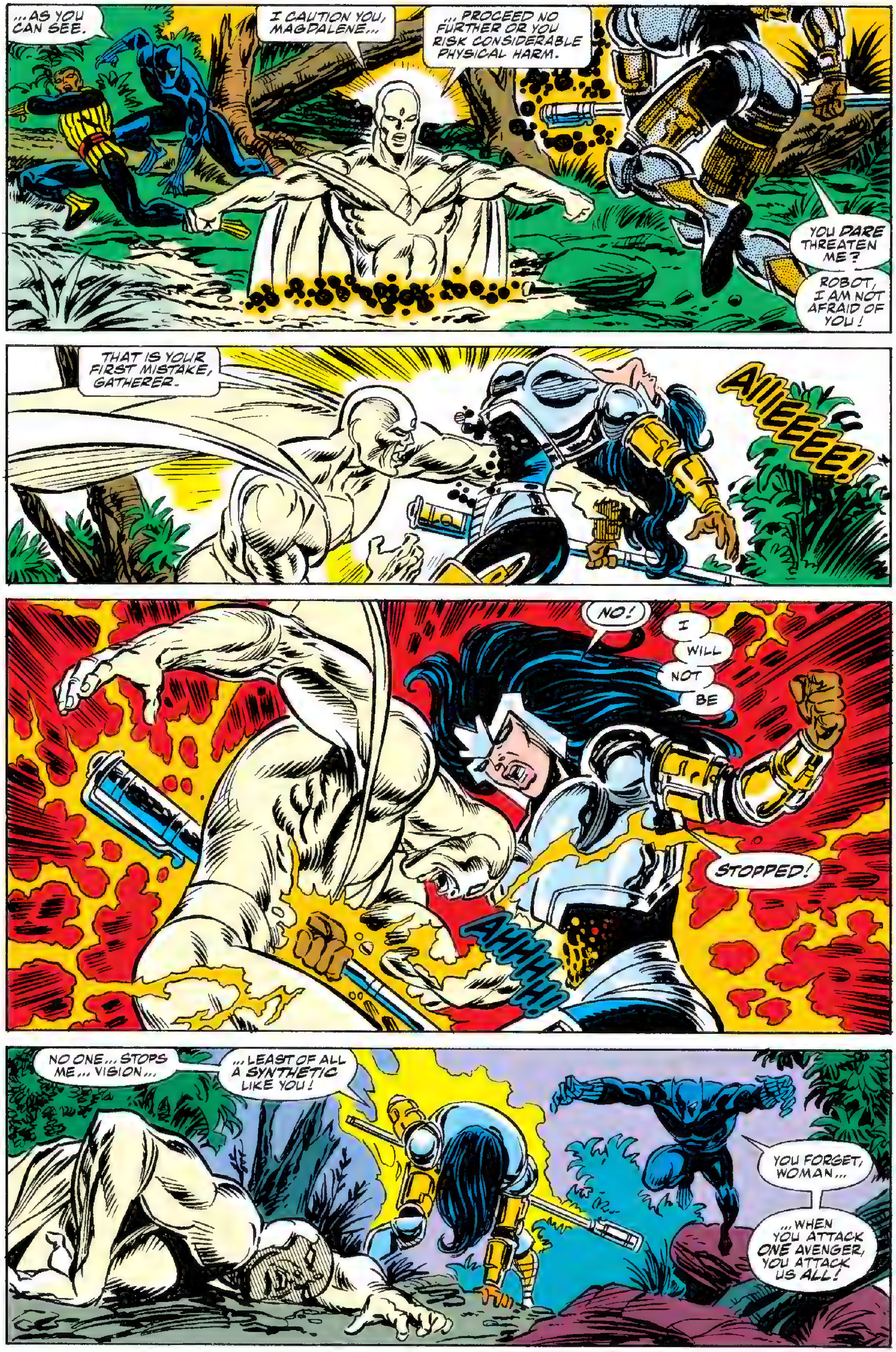

INCREDIBLE!
CASSANDRA HIT THEM WITH A CONCENTRATED TELEKINETIC ASSAULT...*
...AND YET...
...HERE THEY ARE!
MAGDALENE... WAIT!
WE MUST STOP THEM, PHILIP! COME!
*LAST ISSUE.--R.M.
I'M... CONFUSED, MAGGIE...
...SOMETHING ABOUT THIS DOESN'T SEEM... RIGHT.
NO! NOT NOW.
YOU NEED PROCTOR, BELOVED. HE'LL MAKE EVERYTHING CLEAR AGAIN, I PROMISE.
T'CHALLA, ARE YOU INJURED?
YOU WARNED ME THE OLD WOMAN'S POWER WAS FORMIDABLE, VISION, BUT THIS--!
MY BRAIN FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN SCRUBBED WITH STEEL WOOL...
...BUT I GUESS I'LL LIVE.
I AM RELIEVED.
IT IS SELF-EVIDENT THAT OUR SUSPICION THAT THESE ASSAILANTS WOULD JOURNEY TO WAKANDA WAS CORRECT.
BUT I CAN ASCERTAIN NO LOGICAL REASON FOR THEIR ACTIONS IN SEEKING TO KILL YOU.
PERHAPS I CAN SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE MATTER, MY FRIEND...
...BECAUSE ONE OF THESE ASSAILANTS, AS YOU CALL THEM, APPEARS TO BE MY EXACT TWIN!
THIS IS MOST...
...UNEXPECTED.

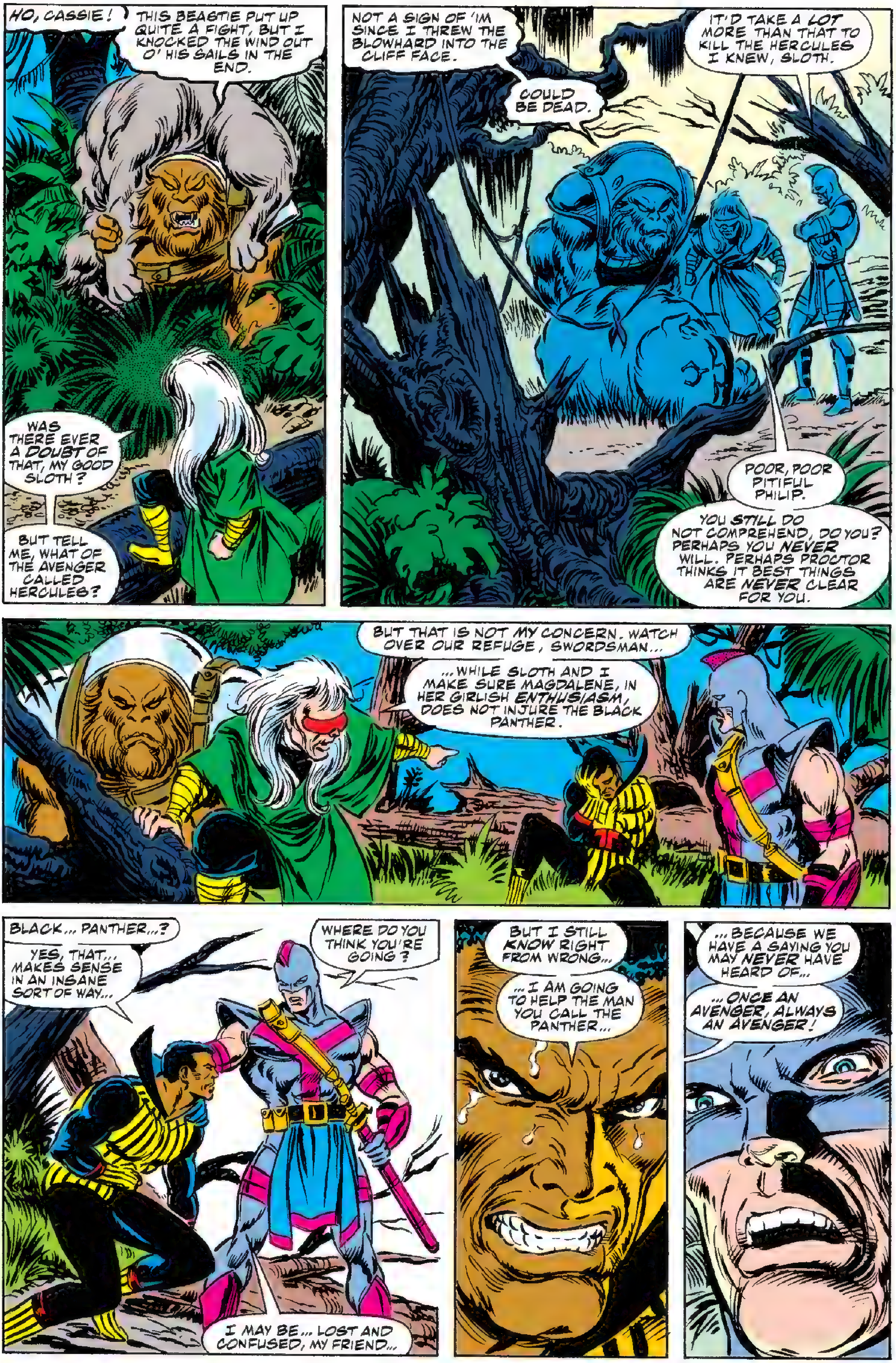

NEW YORK.
AVENGERS MANSION.
NICE.
REPAIRING THIS MESS SHOULD SET US BACK A COUPLE MIL, EH, TASHA?
I GUESS HERK AND THE OTHERS ARE IN WAKANDA BY NOW.
YES.
WE SHOULD CONSIDER OURSELVES LUCKY THAT THE COMPUTER CORE WASN'T DAMAGED IN THE ATTACK...
... AND WE WERE ABLE TO TRACE THE RECORDS THE SWORDSMAN WAS ACCESSING...
... OR WE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD EVEN THE SLIGHTEST CLUE AS TO THEIR NEXT MOVE!
BLAST IT! I CAN'T STAND NOT KNOWING WHAT'S GOING ON!
BAM
DANE, PLEASE... BE REALISTIC.
WE WERE SEVERELY STUNNED BY CASSANDRA'S MIND-BLAST, AND THE EFFECTS ARE ONLY NOW STARTING TO FADE.
OUR REACTION TIME IS WAY DOWN, OUR THINKING SLUGGISH.
EVEN THOR AND THE OTHERS ARE HARDLY AT OPTIMUM LEVELS, DESPITE THEIR MORE RESILIENT BODIES.
AND WE MERE HUMANS GET TO SIT AND WAIT.
Y'KNOW, I NEVER LIKED WAITING.
MY FRIEND, MAY I MAKE AN OBSERVATION?
I'VE NOTICED A CERTAIN IMPETUOUSNESS... A RECKLESSNESS... IN YOU SINCE YOU REJOINED THE AVENGERS.
BEWARE IT, DANE, BECAUSE SUCH DARING CAN LEAD TO DISASTER ...FOR YOUR TEAMMATES, BUT MOST OF ALL FOR YOU.
AYE-AYE, MA'AM!
I'LL TRY AND BE A BETTER BOY!
CRYSTAL'S RIGHT ABOUT YOU--
--YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE!
CHARMING, BUT IMPOSSIBLE!

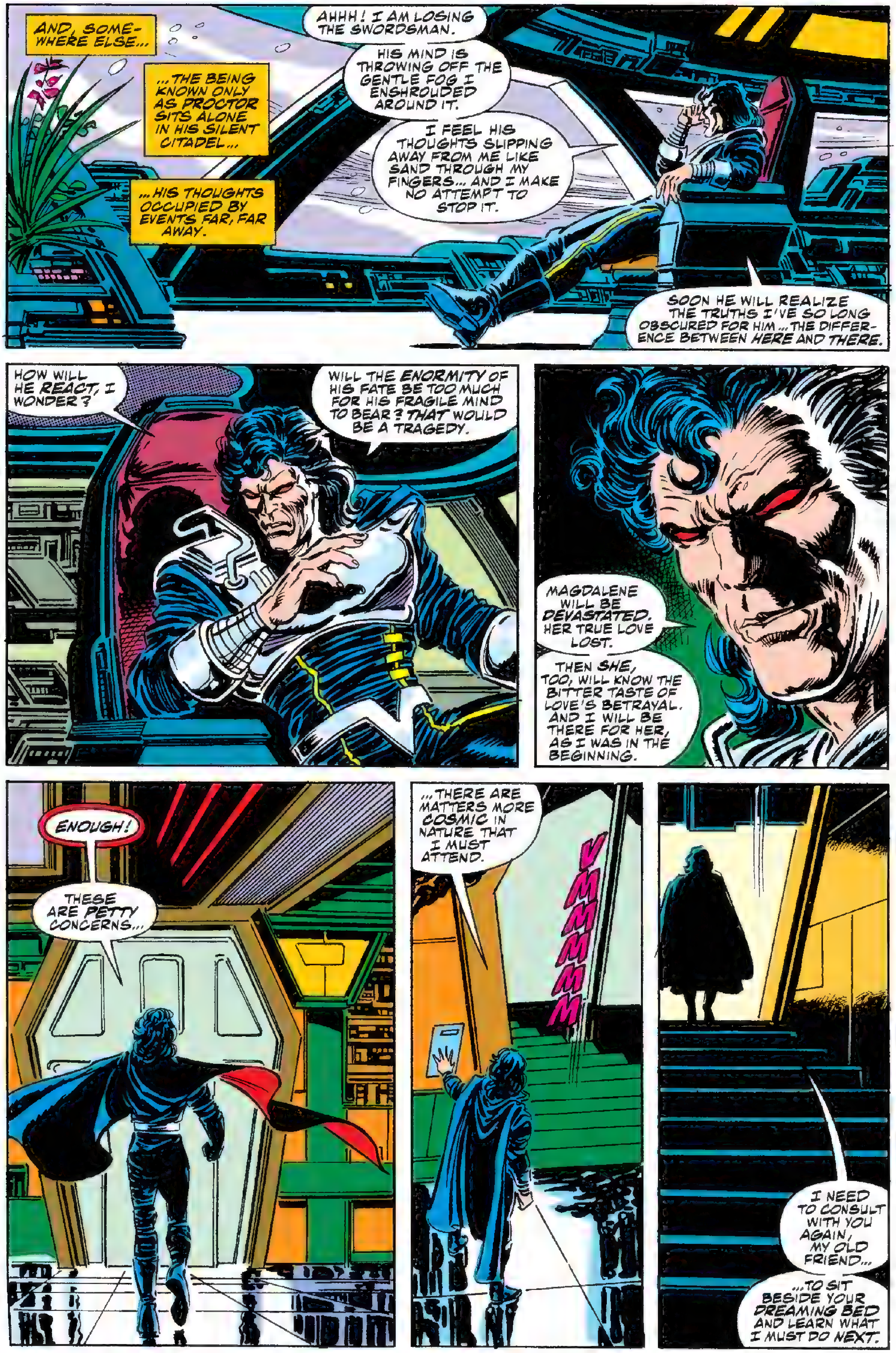

WHY, THANK YOUUUUUUUUU
DANE?!
'S'OK... SORRY...
EVERYTHING ...STARTED SPINNING...
YOU SHOULDN'T BE UP!
YOU BARELY HAD A CHANCE TO RECOVER FROM RAZA'S ATTACK*--AND NOW THIS!
*IN OUR SEMI-LEGENDARY 350TH ISSUE! --SEMI-NOSTALGIC RALF
TSK, TSK, TSK!
HERE BE OUR ERRANT ONES! AND SURELY NOW WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING THE WHOLE OF THE HOUSE FOR THEM, EH, JEBEDIAH?
MADAME--FOR THE LAST TIME--
--AND I HAVE BEEN VERY PATIENT ON THE MATTER, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF--
--MY NAME IS JARVIS!
JARVIS! MARILLA! THANK GOODNESS!
NOW, NOW, MASTER KNIGHT, YOU KNOW THE DOCTOR ORDERED BEDREST!
WHAT WOULD HE THINK, SEEING YOU UP AND ABOUT LIKE THIS?
AND YOU, MADAME NATASHA! WHAT KIND OF EXAMPLE IS THIS FOR YE T'BE SETTIN'?
WHAT GOOD WILL YE BE FOR SAVIN' THE WORLD AND SUCH IF THE BOTH OF YE GET SICK, I'D VERY MUCH LIKE TO KNOW?
AH, ME, WHAT ARE WE T'DO WITH THESE YOUNG ONES, I WONDER, JERKINS?
I FEAR THEY'D BE LOST WITHOUT US.
JARVIS, MADAME, JARVIS! J-A-R...
OH, NEVER MIND.
I BELIEVE WE'D ALL BE LOST WITHOUT EACH OTHER, MARILLA.
LET'S PUT THE 'YOUNG ONES' TO BED, SHALL WE?

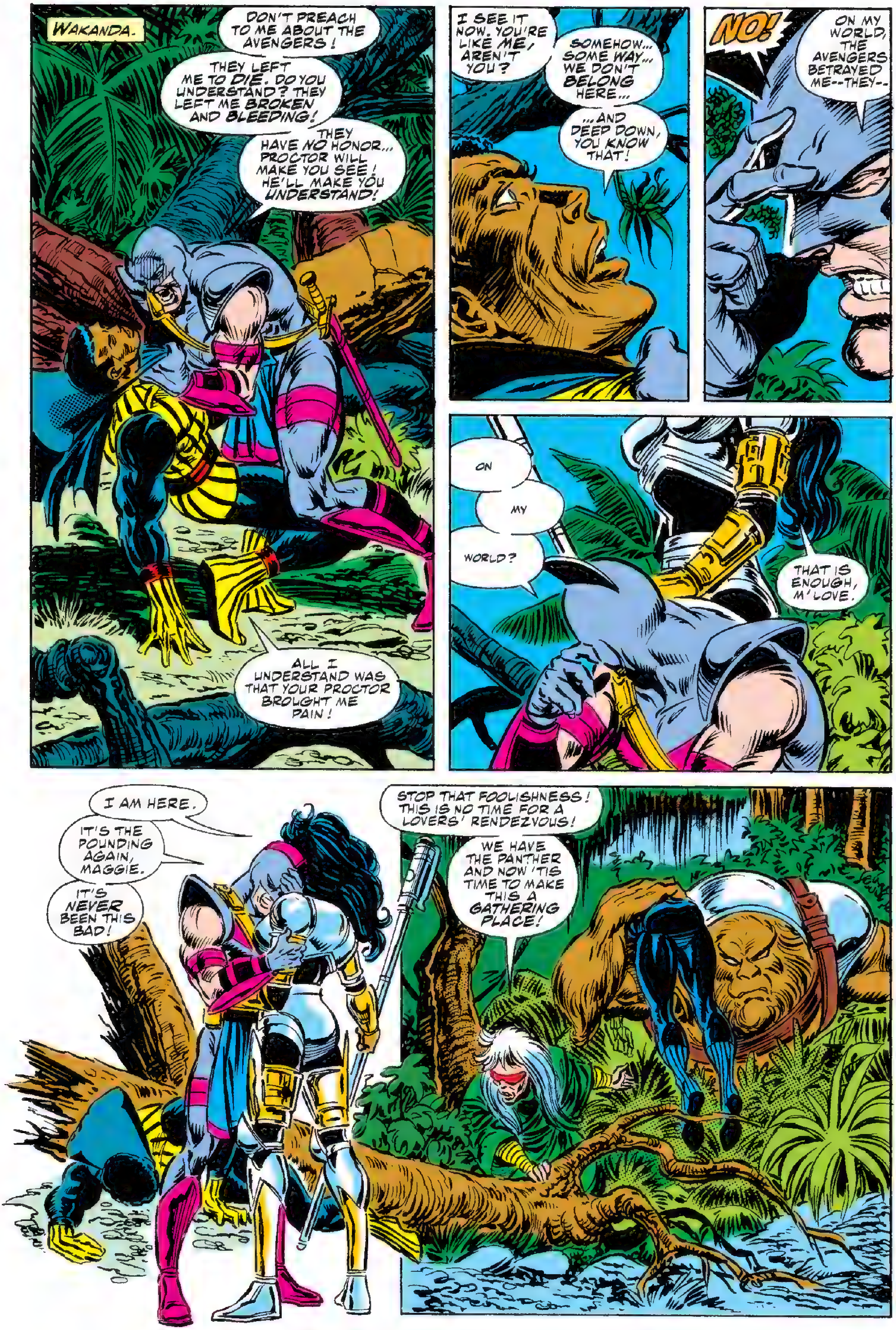

WAKANDA.
OH, BUT YOU'RE A CLEVER LITTLE THING, AREN'T YOU, MY LOVELY ONE?
SKREEEE
WHAT--?!
ARRGHH!
YOU SAID I WAS DANGEROUS...
...AND YOU WERE RIGHT...
...I AM EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.
NOW, LET US SEE WHAT UGLY, DARK THOUGHTS LIE BEHIND SUCH A COMELY FACE.
AFTER ALL, SUCH THOUGHTS ARE THE MIRROR OF THE SOUL.
AIEEE
BY MY FATHER'S BEARD!
SERSI--?!
ACH, POOR, POOR FOOL!
SMKASH!
'TIS ONLY OLD CASSIE HAVING HER FUN...
...AND NOW YOU PAY THE PRICE FOR YOUR CONCERN.

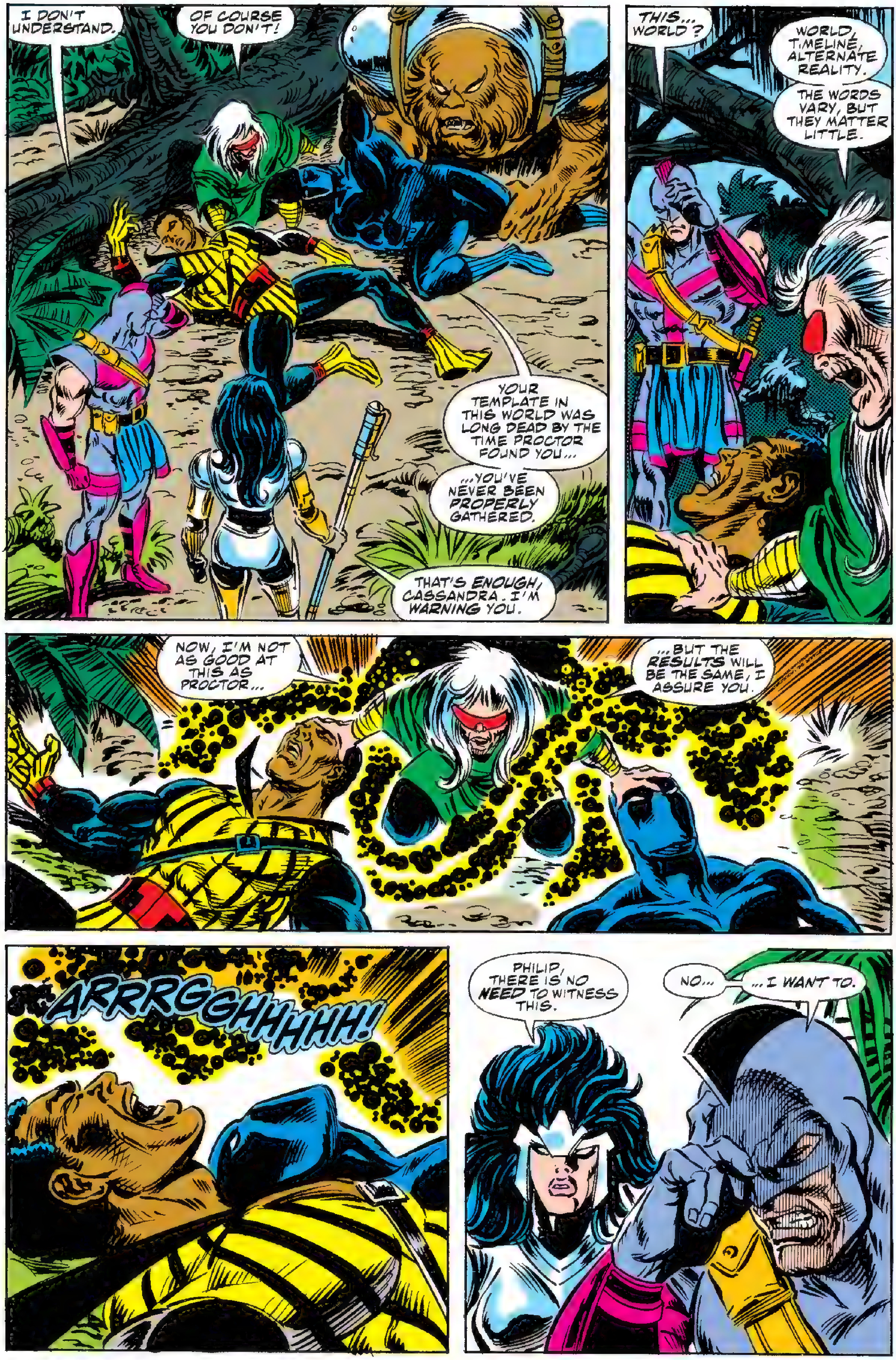

WELL DONE, SLOTH!
WE HAVE THEM!
NO-- MAGDALENE, WAIT!
PHILIP?!
MAGGIE, YOU'VE NEVER LIED TO ME, I KNOW.
YOU AND PROCTOR BOTH SAVED ME AFTER THE AVENGERS LEFT ME FOR DEAD. I OWE YOU EVERYTHING...
...BUT SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE. SOMETHING DOESN'T ADD UP IN MY MIND.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT... IT'S ALL CONFUSING, BUT...
...ALL THESE AVENGERS WE'VE FOUND. HAWKEYE AND CAP DEAD... IT'S TOO CONFUSING.
MAGGIE, WHAT'S GOING ON?
MY LOVE, BELIEVE ME, A GATHER IS NOT THE PLACE FOR QUESTIONS...
...WHEN WE HAVE TIME, I'LL EXPLAIN IT ALL. BUT NOT NOW, M'LOVE.
NOT NOW!
AHHH, YOU'RE AWAKE NOW. AND AS SURPRISED TO SEE ME AS I WAS YOU.
W-WHO--?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW.
A TWIN. A BROTHER, PERHAPS.
A FRIEND, CERTAINLY. MY NAME IS T'CHALLA.
THEN THE MYSTERY CONTINUES, FRIEND, FOR THAT IS MY NAME, AS WELL.
YOU HAVE LEARNED ENOUGH, AVENGERS!
MY FRIEND... WHOEVER YOU ARE... BEWARE THESE GATHERERS...
...FOR THEY ARE EVIL INCARNATE.
DON'T BE AFRAID... WE'RE NOT ALONE HERE...

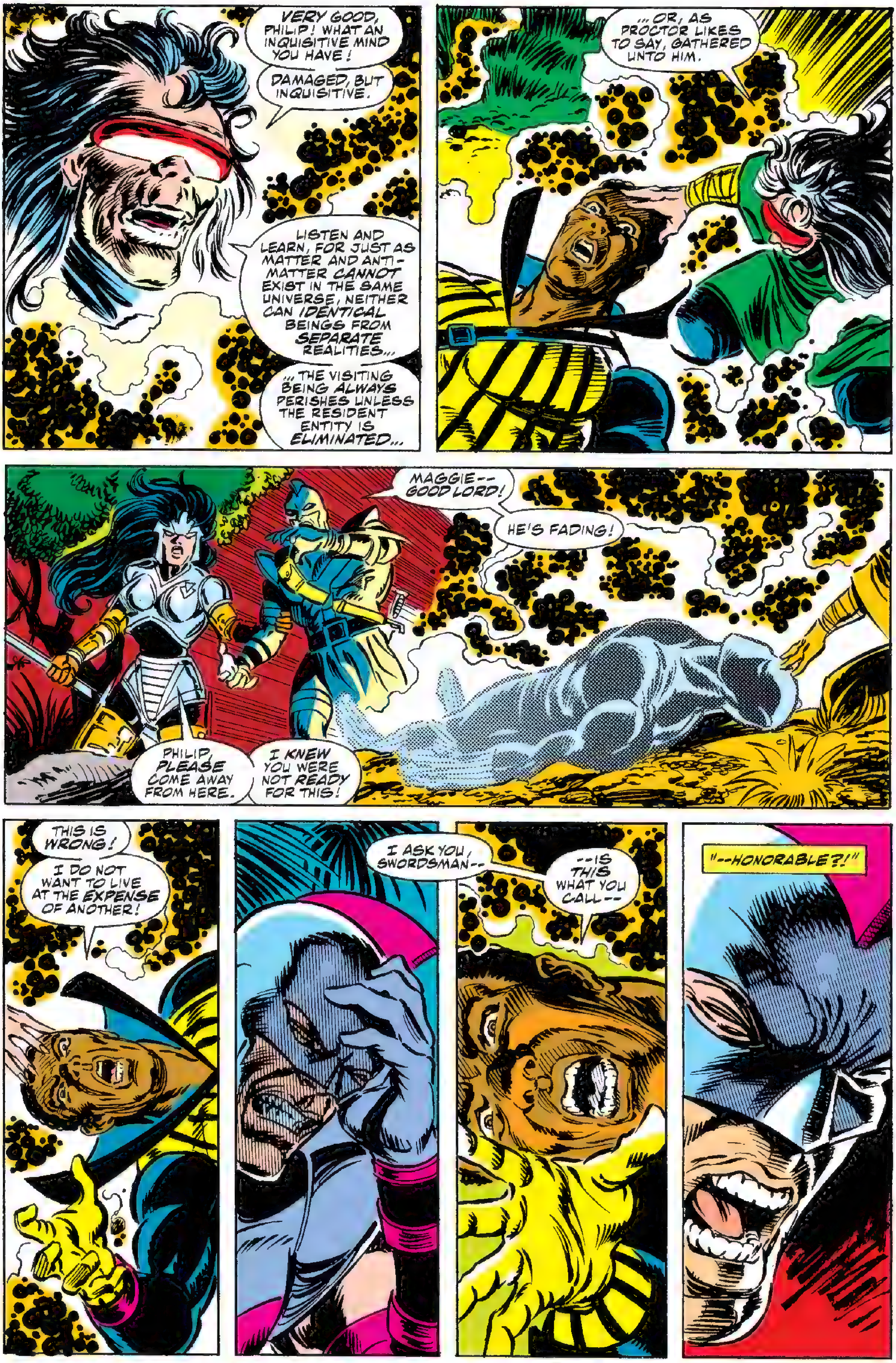

...AS YOU CAN SEE.
I CAUTION YOU, MAGDALENE...
...PROCEED NO FURTHER OR YOU RISK CONSIDERABLE PHYSICAL HARM.
YOU *DARE* THREATEN ME?
ROBOT, I AM NOT AFRAID OF YOU!
THAT IS YOUR FIRST MISTAKE, GATHERER.
AIIIEEEEE!
NO!
I
WILL
NOT
BE
STOPPED!
AHHHH!
NO ONE... STOPS ME... VISION...
...LEAST OF ALL A *SYNTHETIC* LIKE YOU!
YOU FORGET, WOMAN...
...WHEN YOU ATTACK *ONE* AVENGER, YOU ATTACK US *ALL!*

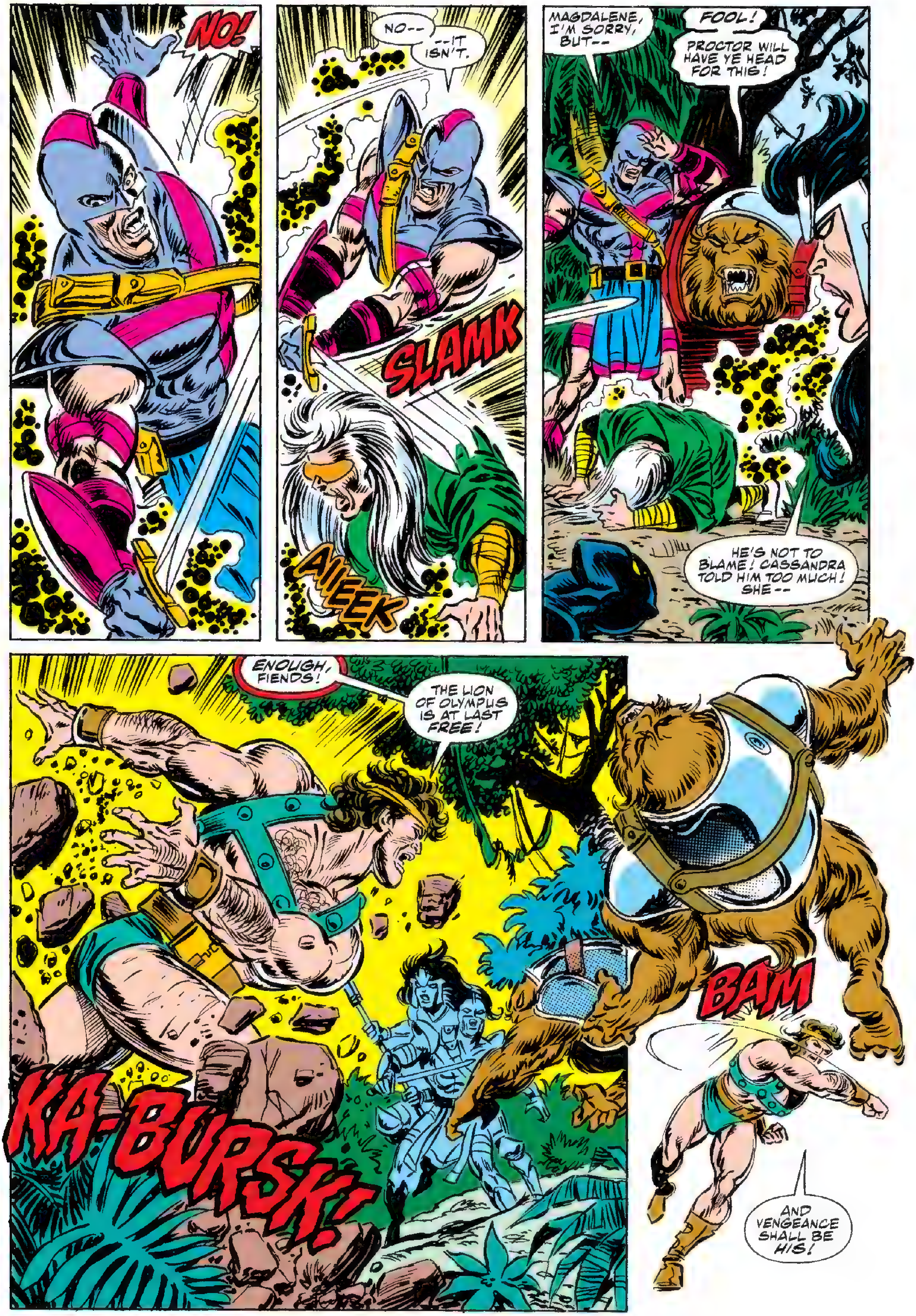

HO, CASSIE!
THIS BEASTIE PUT UP QUITE A FIGHT, BUT I KNOCKED THE WIND OUT O' HIS SAILS IN THE END.
WAS THERE EVER A DOUBT OF THAT, MY GOOD SLOTH?
BUT TELL ME, WHAT OF THE AVENGER CALLED HERCULES?
NOT A SIGN OF 'IM SINCE I THREW THE BLOWHARD INTO THE CLIFF FACE.
COULD BE DEAD.
IT'D TAKE A LOT MORE THAN THAT TO KILL THE HERCULES I KNEW, SLOTH.
POOR, POOR PITIFUL PHILIP.
YOU STILL DO NOT COMPREHEND, DO YOU? PERHAPS YOU NEVER WILL. PERHAPS PROCTOR THINKS IT BEST THINGS ARE NEVER CLEAR FOR YOU.
BUT THAT IS NOT MY CONCERN. WATCH OVER OUR REFUGE, SWORDSMAN...
...WHILE SLOTH AND I MAKE SURE MAGDALENE, IN HER GIRLISH ENTHUSIASM, DOES NOT INJURE THE BLACK PANTHER.
BLACK... PANTHER...?
YES, THAT... MAKES SENSE IN AN INSANE SORT OF WAY...
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
I MAY BE... LOST AND CONFUSED, MY FRIEND...
BUT I STILL KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG...
...I AM GOING TO HELP THE MAN YOU CALL THE PANTHER...
...BECAUSE WE HAVE A SAYING YOU MAY NEVER HAVE HEARD OF...
...ONCE AN AVENGER, ALWAYS AN AVENGER!

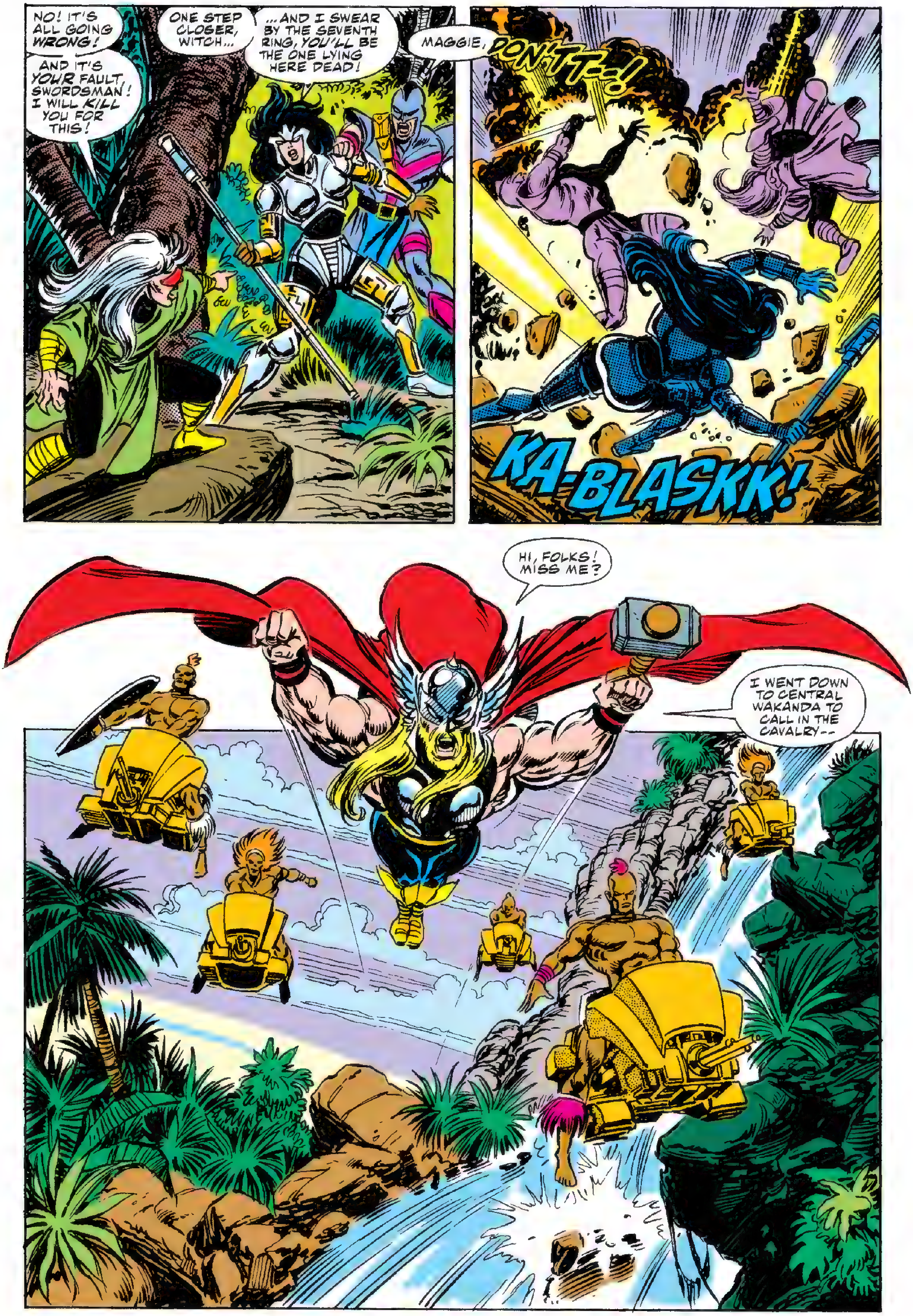

AND, SOMEWHERE ELSE...
...THE BEING KNOWN ONLY AS PROCTOR SITS ALONE IN HIS SILENT CITADEL...
...HIS THOUGHTS OCCUPIED BY EVENTS FAR, FAR AWAY.
AHHH! I AM LOSING THE SWORDSMAN.
HIS MIND IS THROWING OFF THE GENTLE FOG I ENSHROUDED AROUND IT.
I FEEL HIS THOUGHTS SLIPPING AWAY FROM ME LIKE SAND THROUGH MY FINGERS... AND I MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO STOP IT.
SOON HE WILL REALIZE THE TRUTHS I'VE SO LONG OBSCURED FOR HIM ...THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HERE AND THERE.
HOW WILL HE REACT, I WONDER?
WILL THE ENORMITY OF HIS FATE BE TOO MUCH FOR HIS FRAGILE MIND TO BEAR? THAT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY.
MAGDALENE WILL BE DEVASTATED. HER TRUE LOVE LOST.
THEN SHE, TOO, WILL KNOW THE BITTER TASTE OF LOVE'S BETRAYAL. AND I WILL BE THERE FOR HER, AS I WAS IN THE BEGINNING.
ENOUGH!
THESE ARE PETTY CONCERNS...
...THERE ARE MATTERS MORE COSMIC IN NATURE THAT I MUST ATTEND.
VMMMMMM
I NEED TO CONSULT WITH YOU AGAIN, MY OLD FRIEND...
...TO SIT BESIDE YOUR DREAMING BED AND LEARN WHAT I MUST DO NEXT.

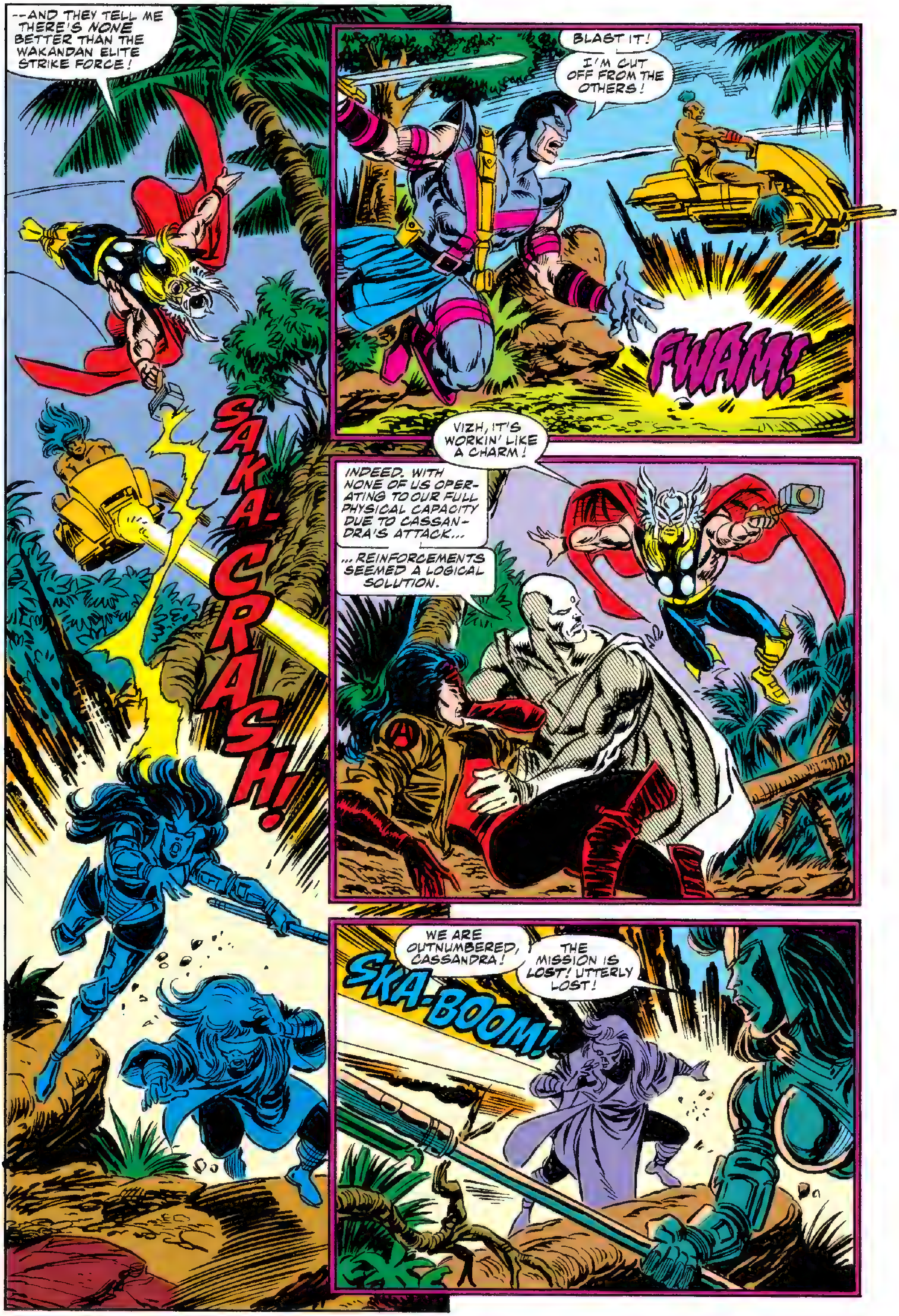

WAKANDA.
DON'T PREACH TO ME ABOUT THE AVENGERS!
THEY LEFT ME TO DIE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THEY LEFT ME BROKEN AND BLEEDING!
THEY HAVE NO HONOR... PROCTOR WILL MAKE YOU SEE! HE'LL MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND!
ALL I UNDERSTAND WAS THAT YOUR PROCTOR BROUGHT ME PAIN!
I SEE IT NOW. YOU'RE LIKE ME, AREN'T YOU?
SOMEHOW... SOME WAY... WE DON'T BELONG HERE...
...AND DEEP DOWN, YOU KNOW THAT!
NO!
ON MY WORLD, THE AVENGERS BETRAYED ME--THEY--
ON
MY
WORLD?
THAT IS ENOUGH, M'LOVE.
I AM HERE.
IT'S THE POUNDING AGAIN, MAGGIE.
IT'S NEVER BEEN THIS BAD!
STOP THAT FOOLISHNESS! THIS IS NO TIME FOR A LOVERS' RENDEZVOUS!
WE HAVE THE PANTHER AND NOW 'TIS TIME TO MAKE THIS A GATHERING PLACE!

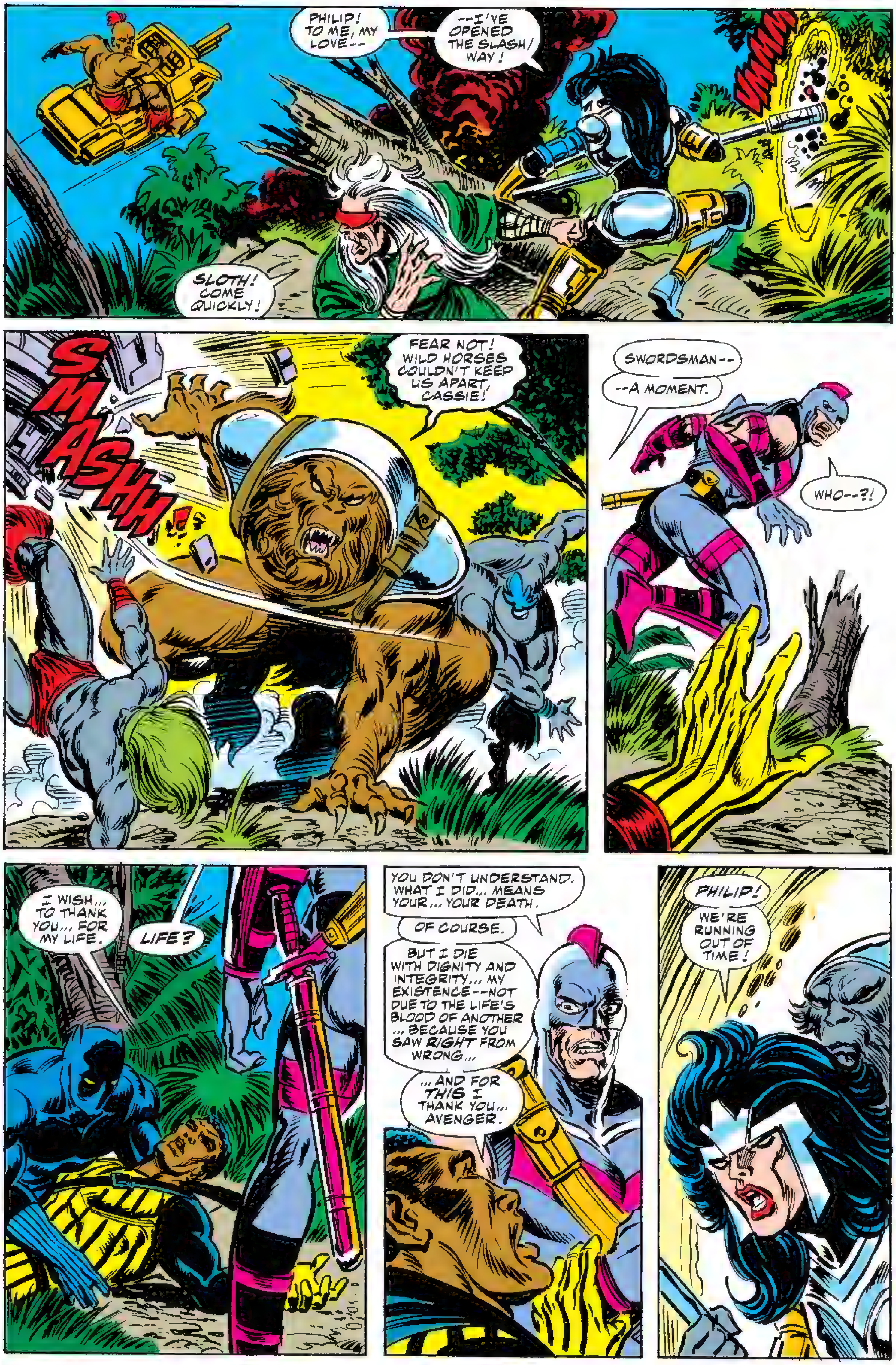

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
OF COURSE YOU DON'T!
YOUR TEMPLATE IN THIS WORLD WAS LONG DEAD BY THE TIME PROCTOR FOUND YOU...
...YOU'VE NEVER BEEN *PROPERLY* GATHERED.
THAT'S *ENOUGH*, CASSANDRA. I'M *WARNING* YOU.
THIS... *WORLD*?
WORLD, TIMELINE, ALTERNATE REALITY.
THE WORDS VARY, BUT THEY MATTER LITTLE.
NOW, I'M NOT AS GOOD AT THIS AS PROCTOR...
...BUT THE *RESULTS* WILL BE THE SAME, I ASSURE YOU.
ARRRGGHHHHH!
PHILIP, THERE IS NO *NEED* TO WITNESS THIS.
NO...
...I *WANT* TO.

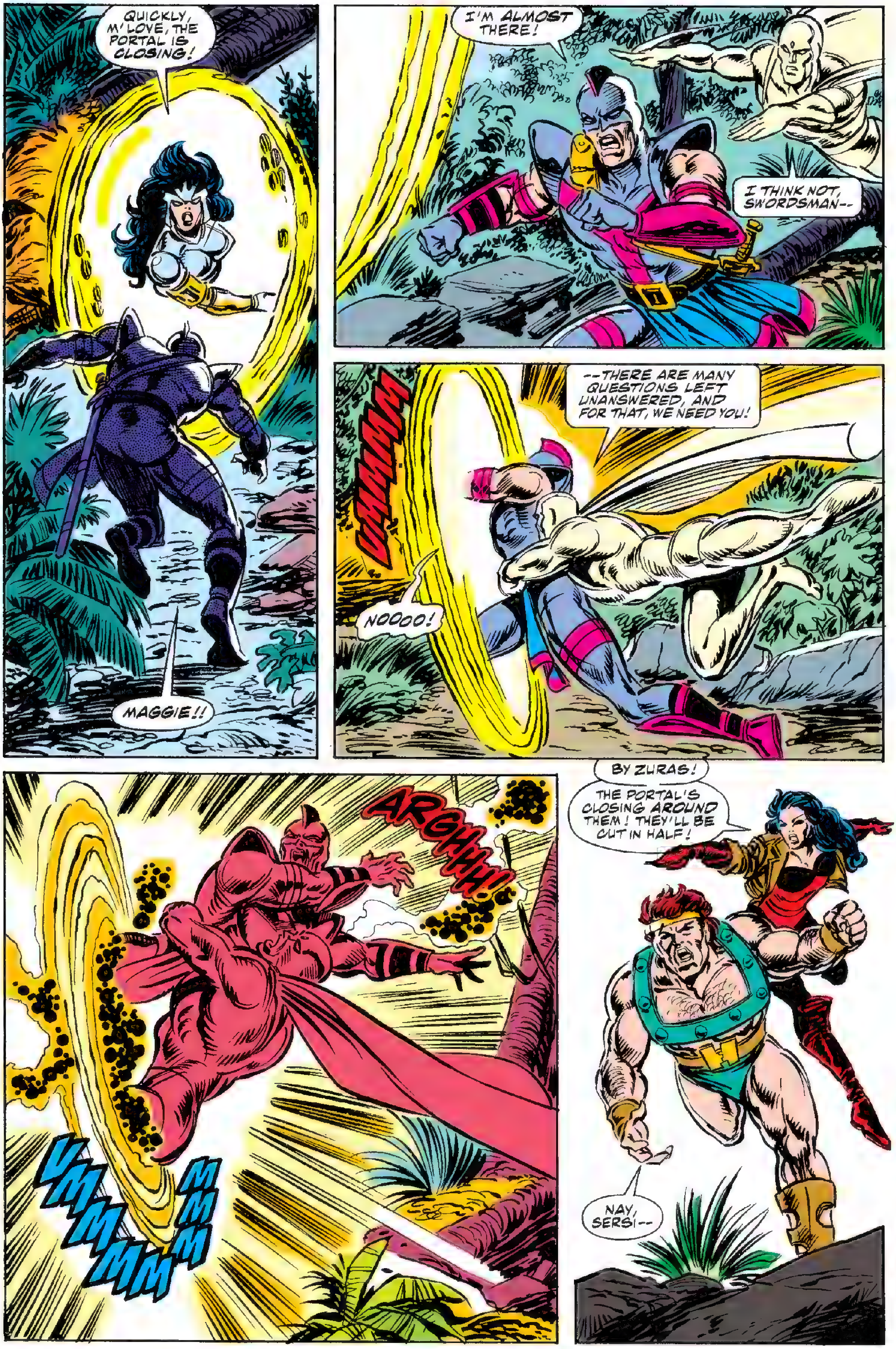

VERY GOOD, PHILIP! WHAT AN INQUISITIVE MIND YOU HAVE!
DAMAGED, BUT INQUISITIVE.
LISTEN AND LEARN, FOR JUST AS MATTER AND ANTI-MATTER CANNOT EXIST IN THE SAME UNIVERSE, NEITHER CAN IDENTICAL BEINGS FROM SEPARATE REALITIES...
...THE VISITING BEING ALWAYS PERISHES UNLESS THE RESIDENT ENTITY IS ELIMINATED...
...OR, AS PROCTOR LIKES TO SAY, GATHERED UNTO HIM.
MAGGIE-- GOOD LORD!
HE'S FADING!
PHILIP, PLEASE COME AWAY FROM HERE.
I KNEW YOU WERE NOT READY FOR THIS!
THIS IS WRONG!
I DO NOT WANT TO LIVE AT THE EXPENSE OF ANOTHER!
I ASK YOU, SWORDSMAN--
--IS THIS WHAT YOU CALL--
"--HONORABLE?!"

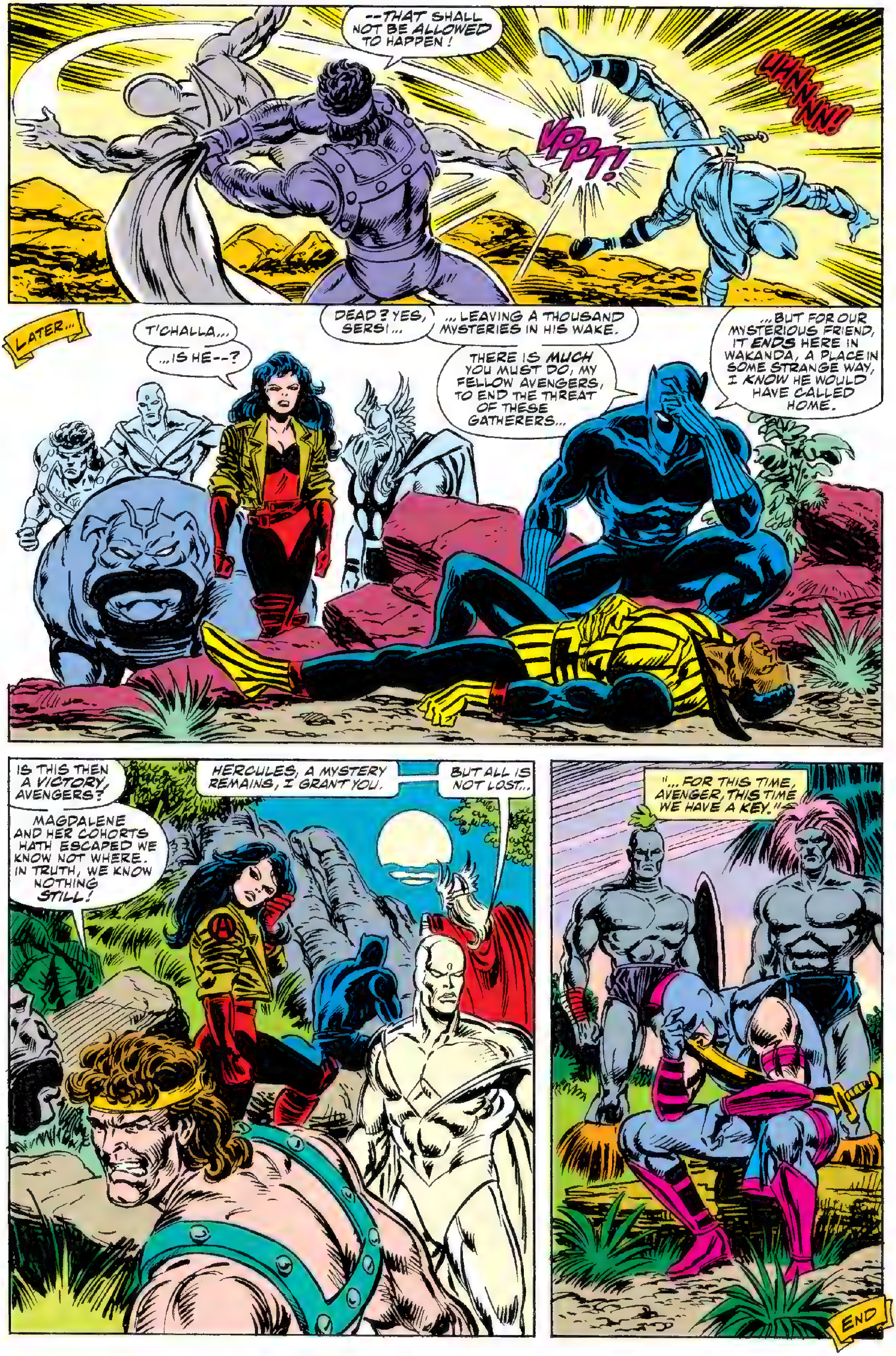

NO!
NO--
--IT ISN'T.
SLAMK
AIIEEK
MAGDALENE, I'M SORRY, BUT--
FOOL!
PROCTOR WILL HAVE YE HEAD FOR THIS!
HE'S NOT TO BLAME! CASSANDRA TOLD HIM TOO MUCH! SHE--
ENOUGH, FIENDS!
THE LION OF OLYMPUS IS AT LAST FREE!
KA-BURSK!
BAM
AND VENGEANCE SHALL BE HIS!


NO! IT'S ALL GOING *WRONG*!
AND IT'S *YOUR* FAULT, SWORDSMAN! I WILL *KILL* YOU FOR THIS!
ONE STEP CLOSER, WITCH...
...AND I SWEAR BY THE SEVENTH RING, *YOU'LL* BE THE ONE LYING HERE DEAD!
MAGGIE, DON'T T--!
KA-BLASKK!
HI, FOLKS! MISS ME?
I WENT DOWN TO CENTRAL WAKANDA TO CALL IN THE CAVALRY--


--AND THEY TELL ME THERE'S *NONE* BETTER THAN THE WAKANDAN ELITE STRIKE FORCE!
SAKA-CRASH!
BLAST IT!
I'M CUT OFF FROM THE OTHERS!
FWAM!
VIZH, IT'S WORKIN' LIKE A CHARM!
INDEED. WITH NONE OF US OPERATING TO OUR FULL PHYSICAL CAPACITY DUE TO CASSANDRA'S ATTACK...
...REINFORCEMENTS SEEMED A LOGICAL SOLUTION.
SKA-BOOM!
WE ARE OUTNUMBERED, CASSANDRA!
THE MISSION IS LOST! UTTERLY LOST!


PHILIP! TO ME, MY LOVE--
--I'VE OPENED THE SLASH WAY!
VMMMM
SLOTH! COME QUICKLY!
SMASHH
FEAR NOT! WILD HORSES COULDN'T KEEP US APART, CASSIE!
SWORDSMAN--
--A MOMENT.
WHO--?!
I WISH... TO THANK YOU... FOR MY LIFE.
LIFE?
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT I DID... MEANS YOUR... YOUR DEATH.
OF COURSE.
BUT I DIE WITH DIGNITY AND INTEGRITY... MY EXISTENCE--NOT DUE TO THE LIFE'S BLOOD OF ANOTHER ...BECAUSE YOU SAW RIGHT FROM WRONG...
...AND FOR THIS I THANK YOU... AVENGER.
PHILIP!
WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME!


QUICKLY, M'LOVE, THE PORTAL IS CLOSING!
MAGGIE!!
I'M ALMOST THERE!
I THINK NOT, SWORDSMAN--
UMMMMM
--THERE ARE MANY QUESTIONS LEFT UNANSWERED, AND FOR THAT, WE NEED YOU!
NOOOO!
ARGHHH!
UMMMMMMMMM
BY ZURAS!
THE PORTAL'S CLOSING AROUND THEM! THEY'LL BE CUT IN HALF!
NAY, SERSI--


--THAT SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN!
VPPT!
UHNNNN!
LATER...
T'CHALLA...
...IS HE--?
DEAD? YES, SERSI...
...LEAVING A THOUSAND MYSTERIES IN HIS WAKE.
THERE IS MUCH YOU MUST DO, MY FELLOW AVENGERS, TO END THE THREAT OF THESE GATHERERS...
...BUT FOR OUR MYSTERIOUS FRIEND, IT ENDS HERE IN WAKANDA, A PLACE IN SOME STRANGE WAY, I KNOW HE WOULD HAVE CALLED HOME.
IS THIS THEN A VICTORY, AVENGERS?
MAGDALENE AND HER COHORTS HATH ESCAPED WE KNOW NOT WHERE. IN TRUTH, WE KNOW NOTHING STILL!
HERCULES, A MYSTERY REMAINS, I GRANT YOU.
BUT ALL IS NOT LOST...
"...FOR THIS TIME, AVENGER, THIS TIME WE HAVE A KEY."
END

EPTING · PALMER

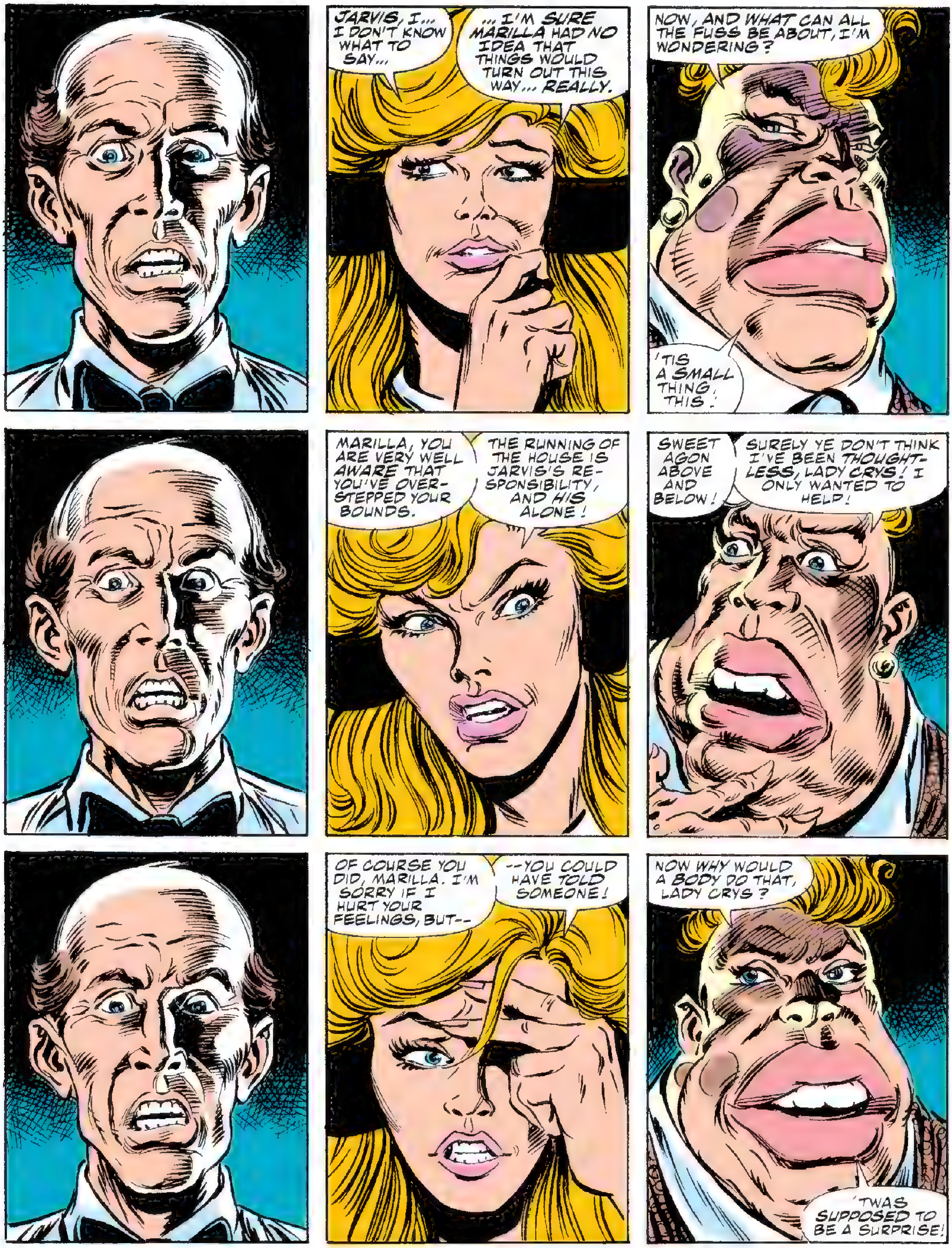
AVENGERS #357 UNUSED COVER ART BY STEVE EPTING, TOM PALMER & CARLOS LOPEZ

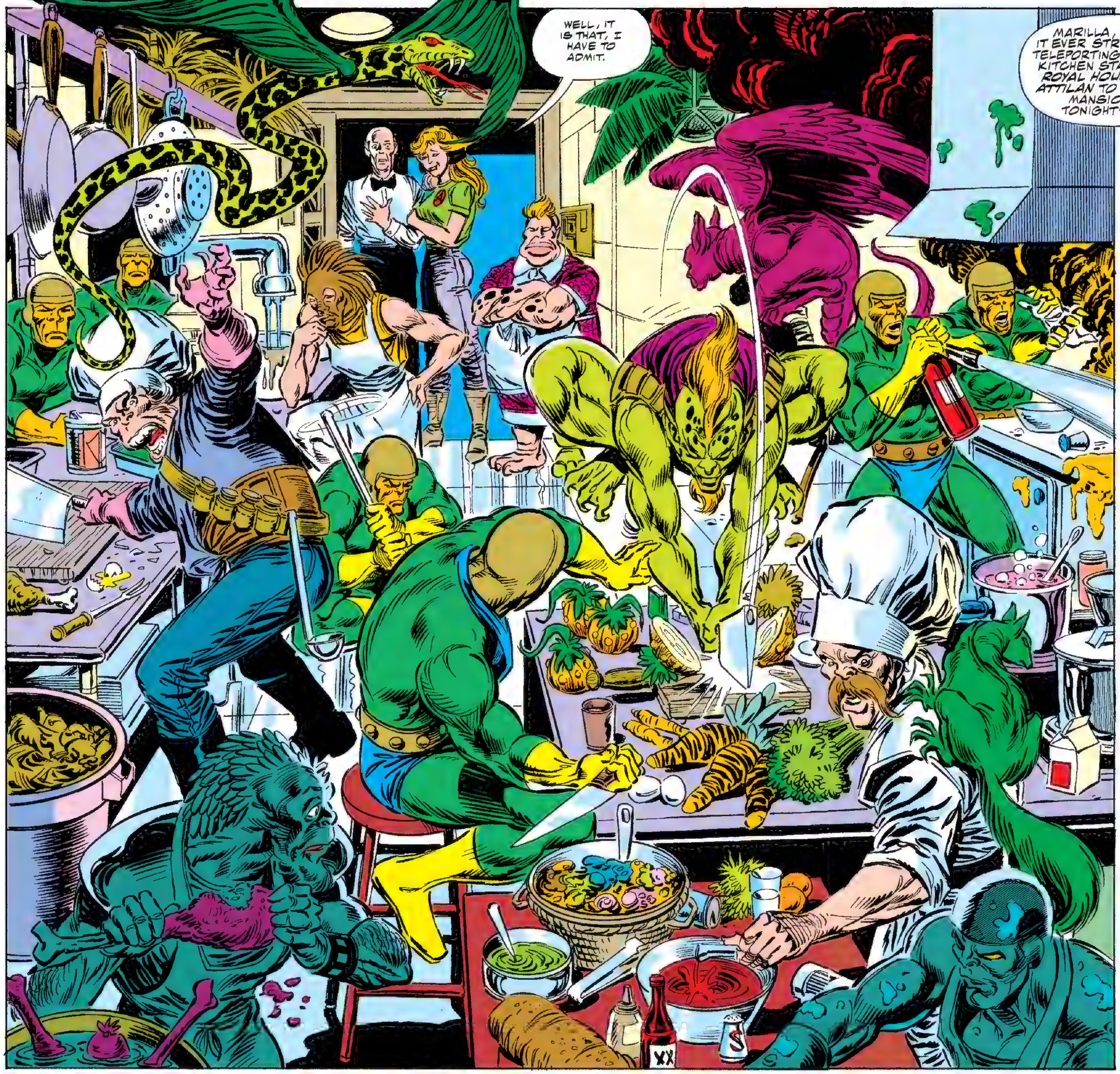
MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
$1.80 AUS
357
MAR
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
© 1992 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
NIGHT WARNINGS!
EPTING · PALMER

TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!

STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

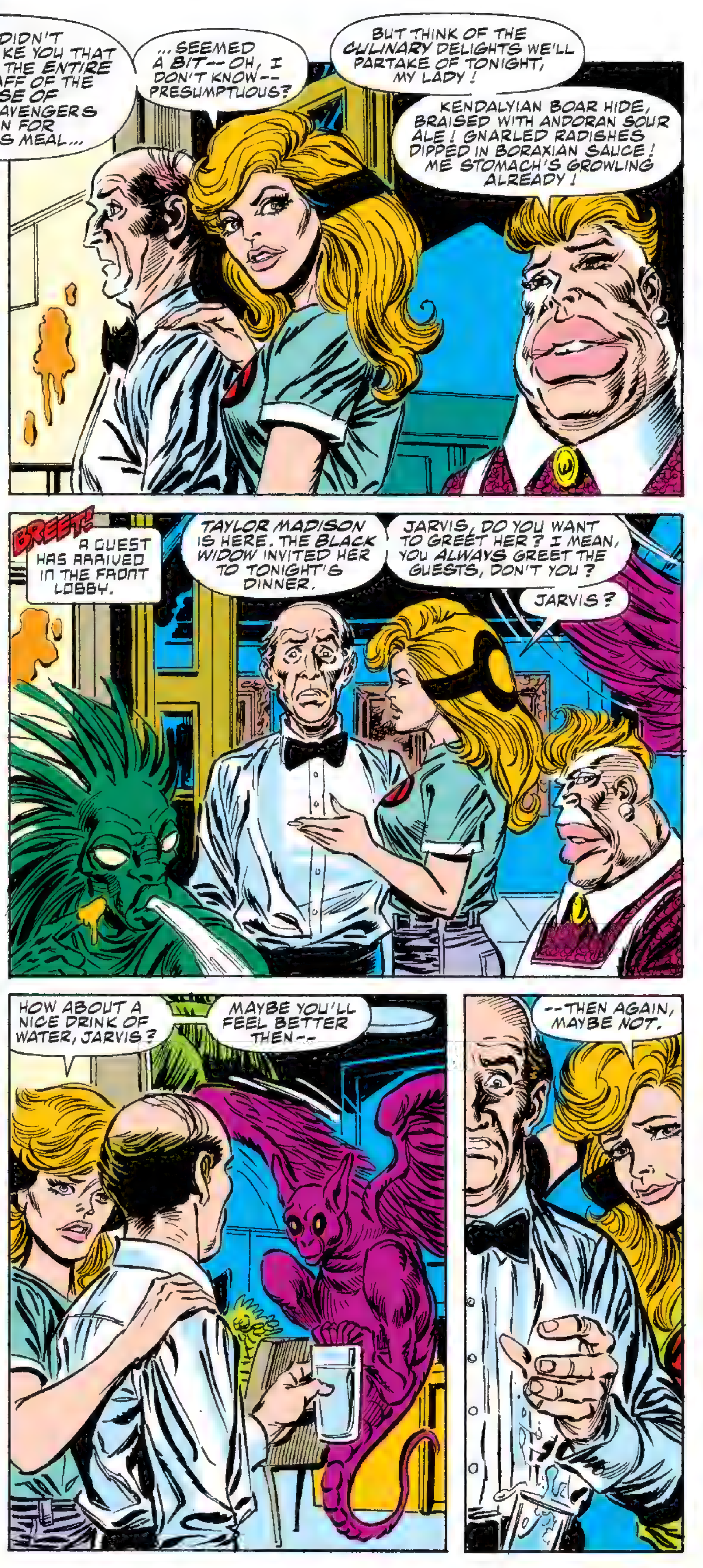
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

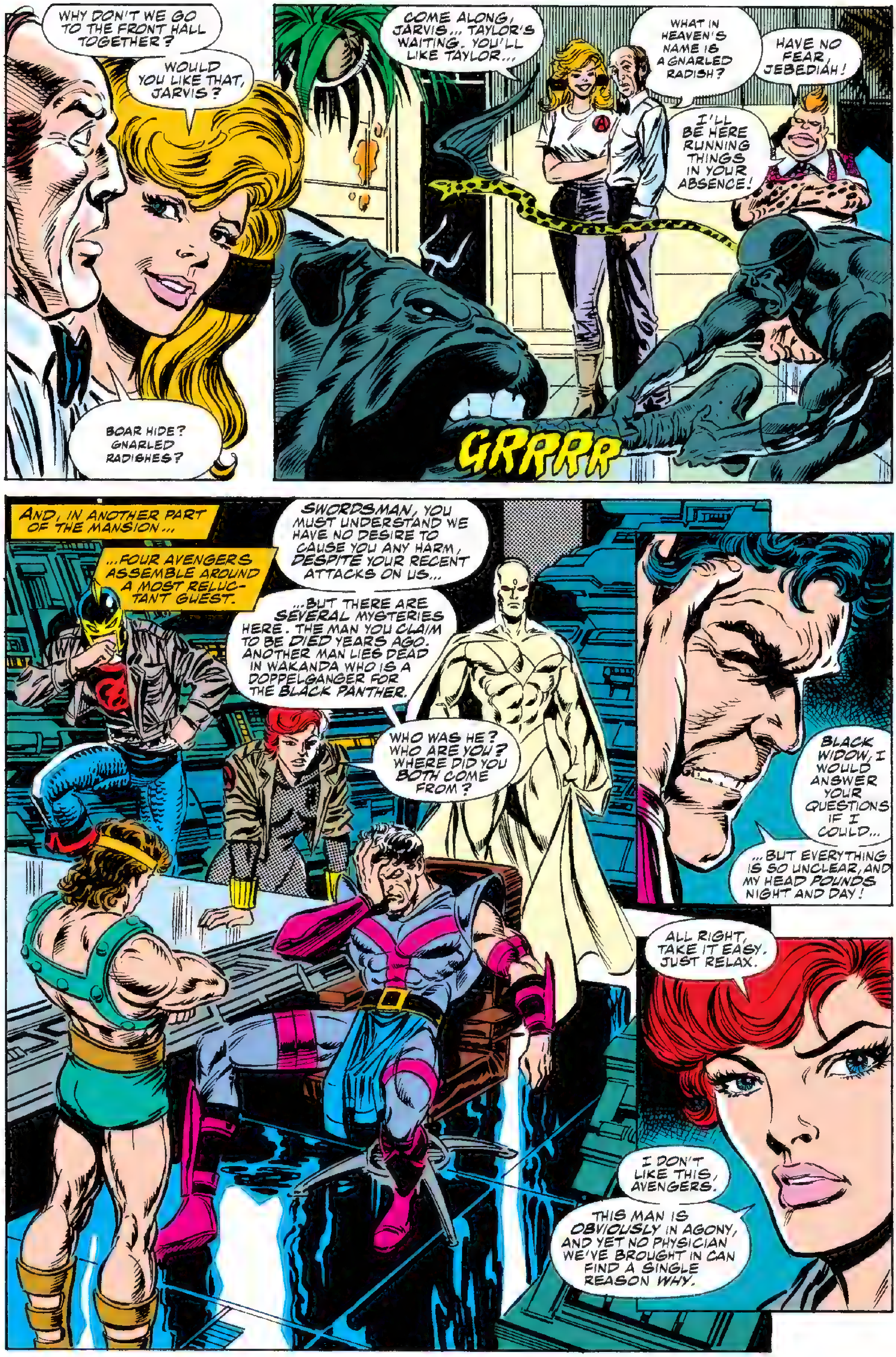

JARVIS, I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
...I'M SURE MARILLA HAD NO IDEA THAT THINGS WOULD TURN OUT THIS WAY... REALLY.
NOW, AND WHAT CAN ALL THE FUSS BE ABOUT, I'M WONDERING?
'TIS A SMALL THING, THIS.
MARILLA, YOU ARE VERY WELL AWARE THAT YOU'VE OVER-STEPPED YOUR BOUNDS.
THE RUNNING OF THE HOUSE IS JARVIS'S RESPONSIBILITY, AND HIS ALONE!
SWEET AGON ABOVE AND BELOW!
SURELY YE DON'T THINK I'VE BEEN THOUGHTLESS, LADY CRYS! I ONLY WANTED TO HELP!
OF COURSE YOU DID, MARILLA. I'M SORRY IF I HURT YOUR FEELINGS, BUT--
--YOU COULD HAVE TOLD SOMEONE!
NOW WHY WOULD A BODY DO THAT, LADY CRYS?
'TWAS SUPPOSED TO BE A SURPRISE!

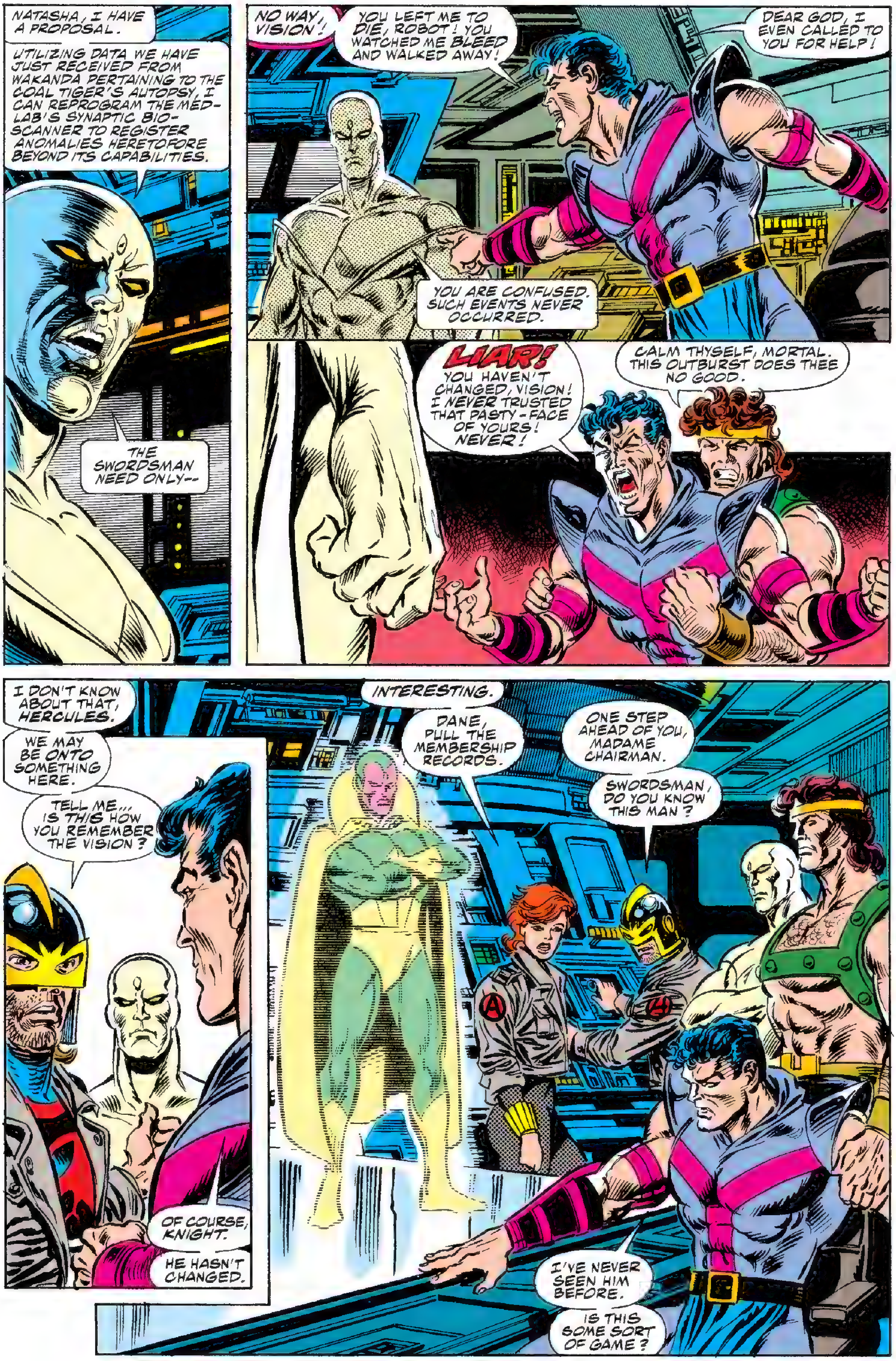

WELL, IT IS THAT, I HAVE TO ADMIT.
MARILLA, DIDN'T IT EVER STRIKE YOU THAT TELEPORTING THE ENTIRE KITCHEN STAFF OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF ATTILAN TO AVENGERS MANSION FOR TONIGHT'S MEAL...
XX
S

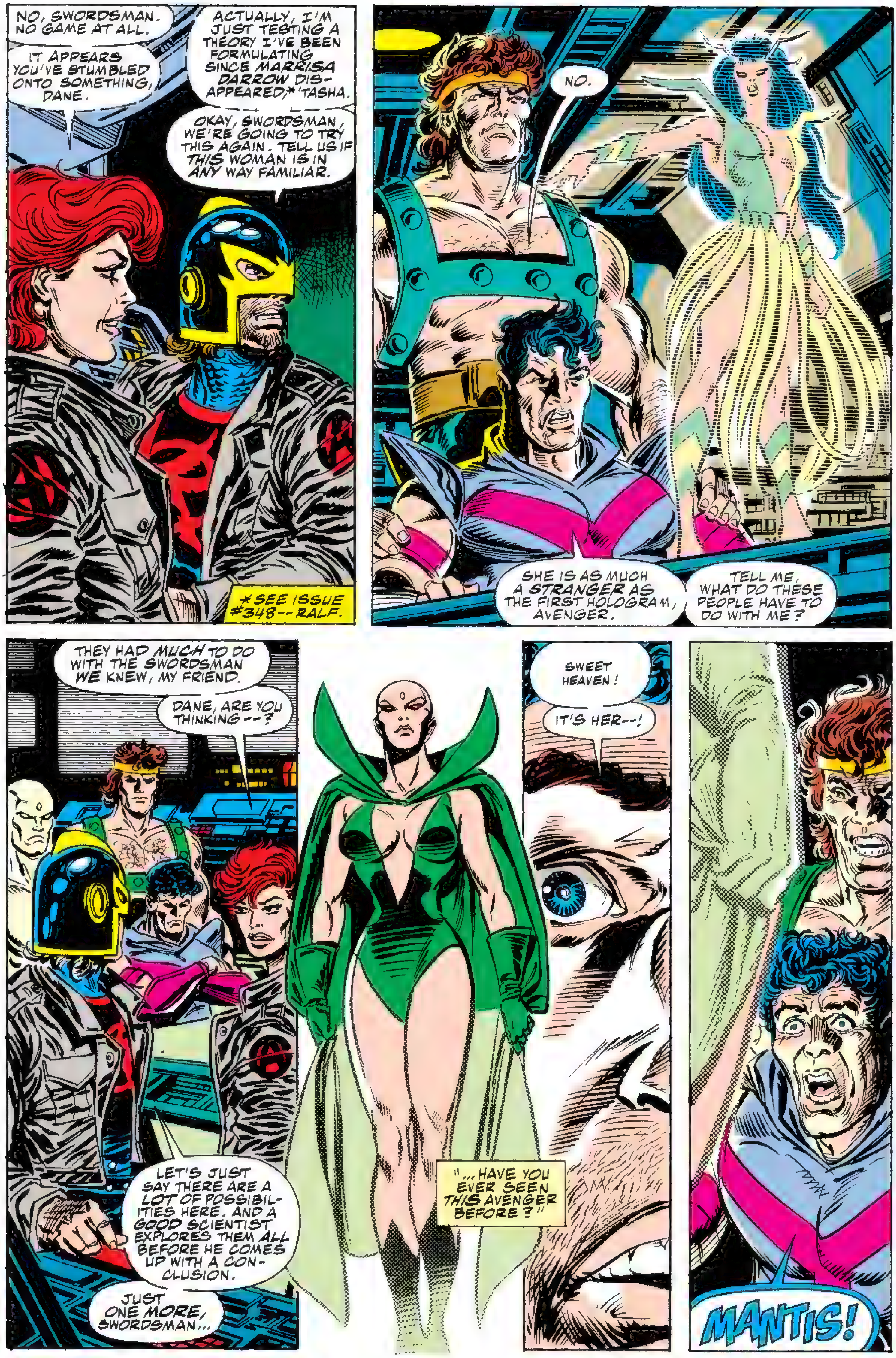
THE NIGHT VISITORS

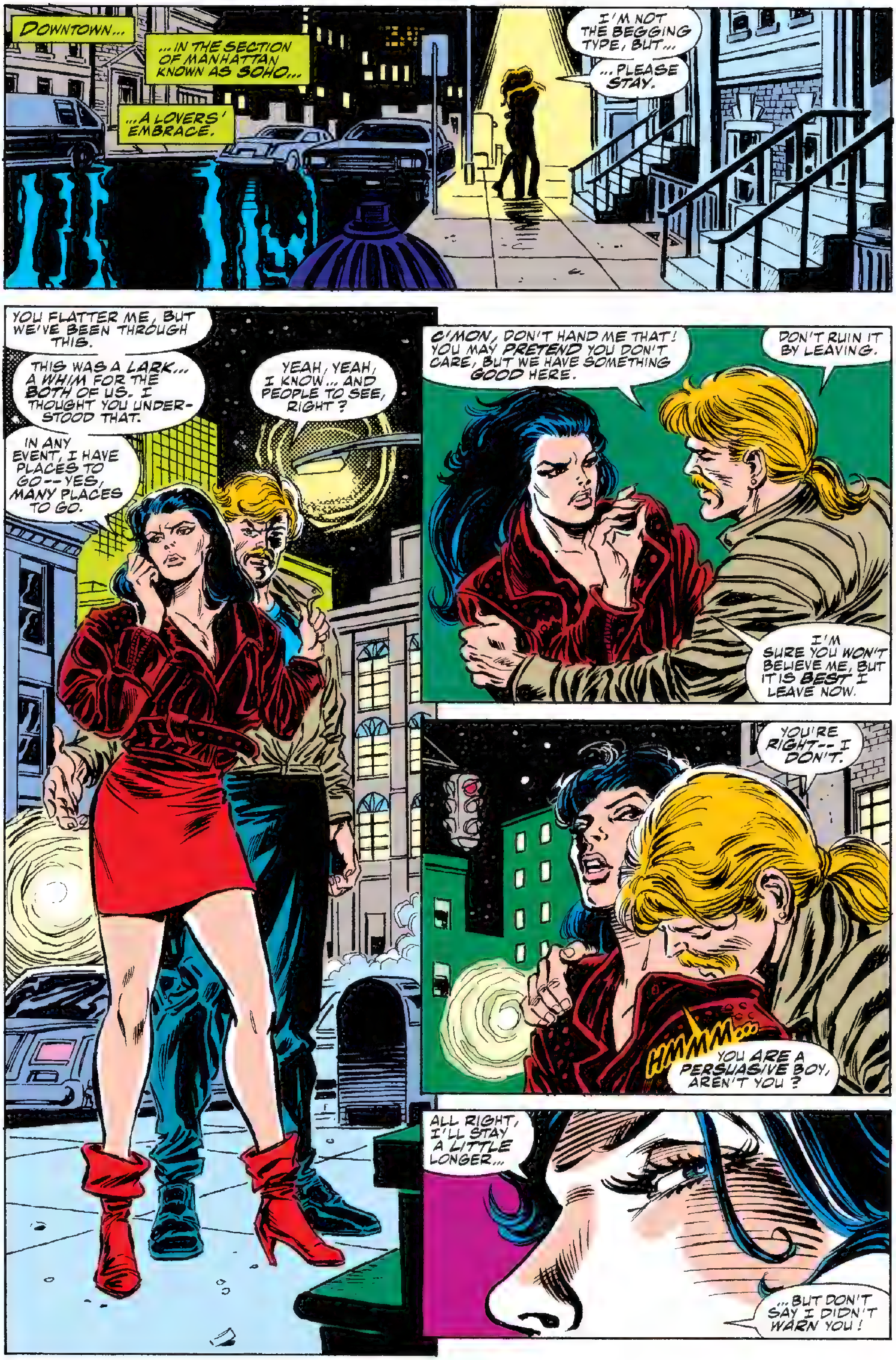
A TALE OF OMENS AND PORTENTS
BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
BOB HARRAS – WRITER
STEVE EPTING – PENCILER
TOM PALMER – INKER / COLORIST
BILL OAKLEY – LETTERER
RALPH MACCHIO – EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO – EDITOR IN CHIEF

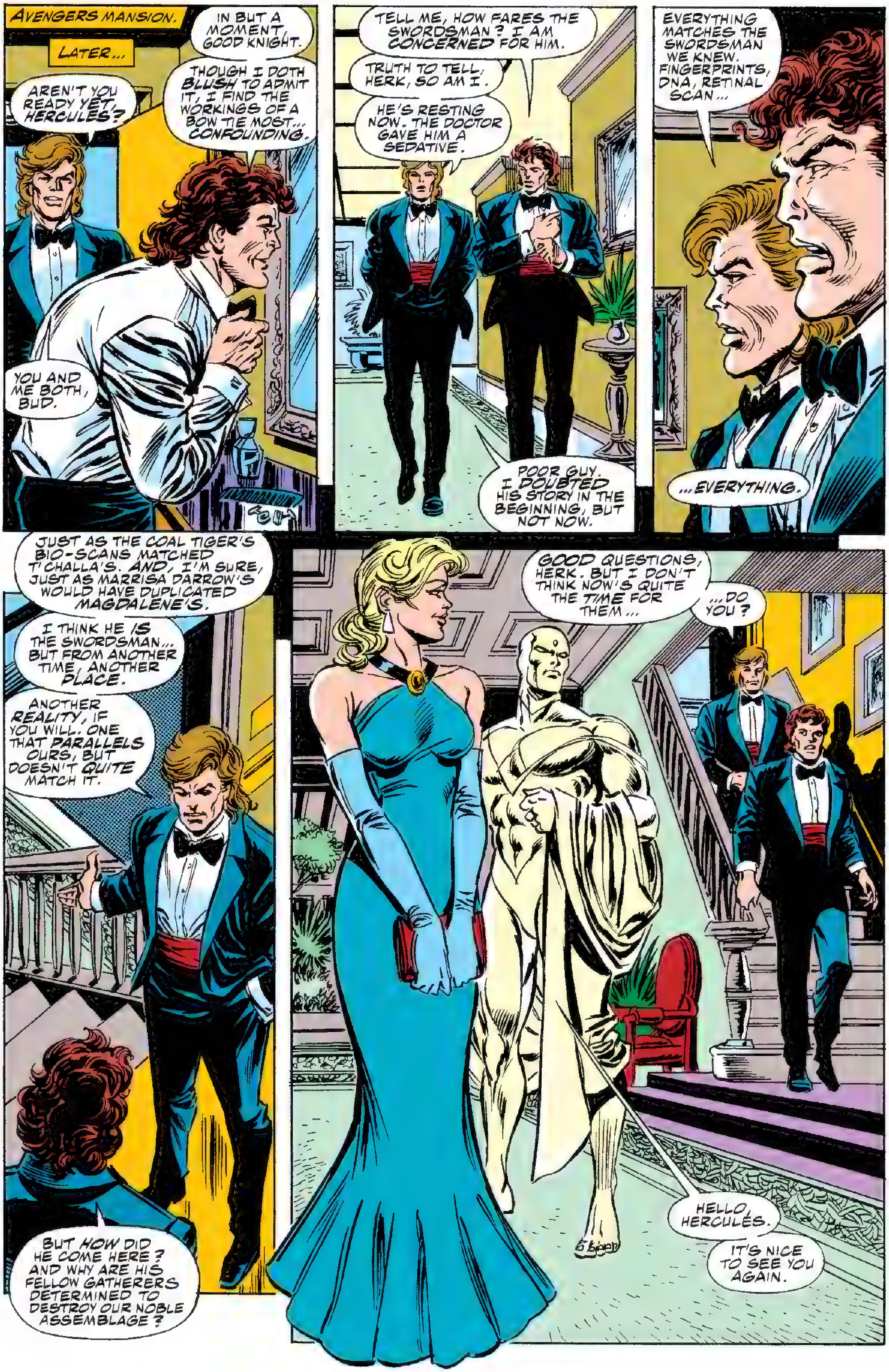

...SEEMED A BIT-- OH, I DON'T KNOW-- PRESUMPTUOUS?
BUT THINK OF THE CULINARY DELIGHTS WE'LL PARTAKE OF TONIGHT, MY LADY!
KENDALYIAN BOAR HIDE, BRAISED WITH ANDORAN SOUR ALE! GNARLED RADISHES DIPPED IN BORAXIAN SAUCE! ME STOMACH'S GROWLING ALREADY!
BREET!
A GUEST HAS ARRIVED IN THE FRONT LOBBY.
TAYLOR MADISON IS HERE. THE BLACK WIDOW INVITED HER TO TONIGHT'S DINNER.
JARVIS, DO YOU WANT TO GREET HER? I MEAN, YOU ALWAYS GREET THE GUESTS, DON'T YOU?
JARVIS?
HOW ABOUT A NICE DRINK OF WATER, JARVIS?
MAYBE YOU'LL FEEL BETTER THEN--
--THEN AGAIN, MAYBE NOT.

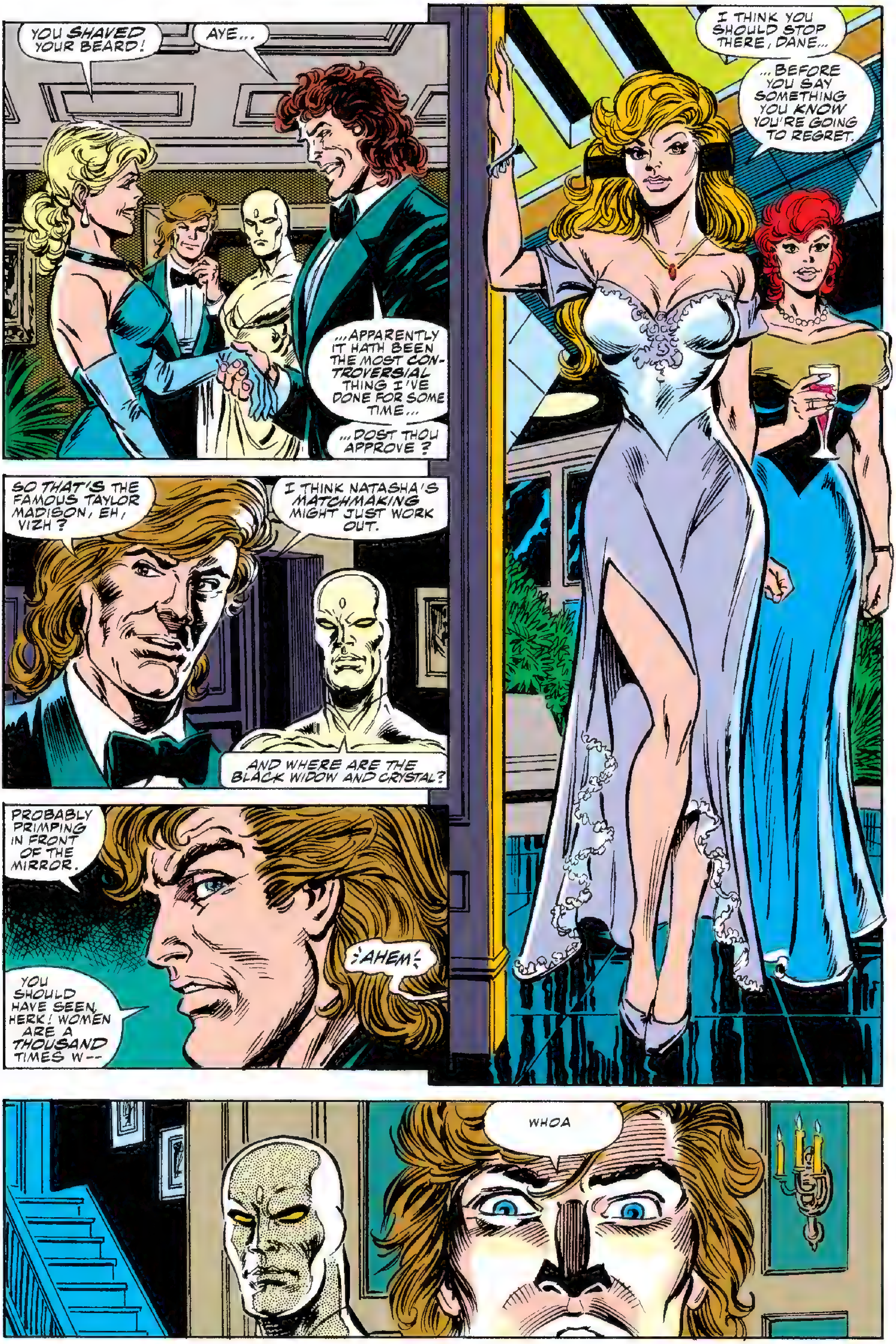

WHY DON'T WE GO TO THE FRONT HALL TOGETHER?
WOULD YOU LIKE THAT, JARVIS?
BOAR HIDE? GNARLED RADISHES?
COME ALONG, JARVIS... TAYLOR'S WAITING. YOU'LL LIKE TAYLOR...
WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME IS A GNARLED RADISH?
HAVE NO FEAR, JEBEDIAH!
I'LL BE HERE RUNNING THINGS IN YOUR ABSENCE!
GRRRR
AND, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE MANSION...
...FOUR AVENGERS ASSEMBLE AROUND A MOST RELUCTANT GUEST.
SWORDSMAN, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO CAUSE YOU ANY HARM, DESPITE YOUR RECENT ATTACKS ON US...
...BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL MYSTERIES HERE. THE MAN YOU CLAIM TO BE DIED YEARS AGO. ANOTHER MAN LIES DEAD IN WAKANDA WHO IS A DOPPELGANGER FOR THE BLACK PANTHER.
WHO WAS HE? WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DID YOU BOTH COME FROM?
BLACK WIDOW, I WOULD ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS IF I COULD...
...BUT EVERYTHING IS SO UNCLEAR, AND MY HEAD POUNDS NIGHT AND DAY!
ALL RIGHT, TAKE IT EASY. JUST RELAX.
I DON'T LIKE THIS, AVENGERS.
THIS MAN IS OBVIOUSLY IN AGONY, AND YET NO PHYSICIAN WE'VE BROUGHT IN CAN FIND A SINGLE REASON WHY.

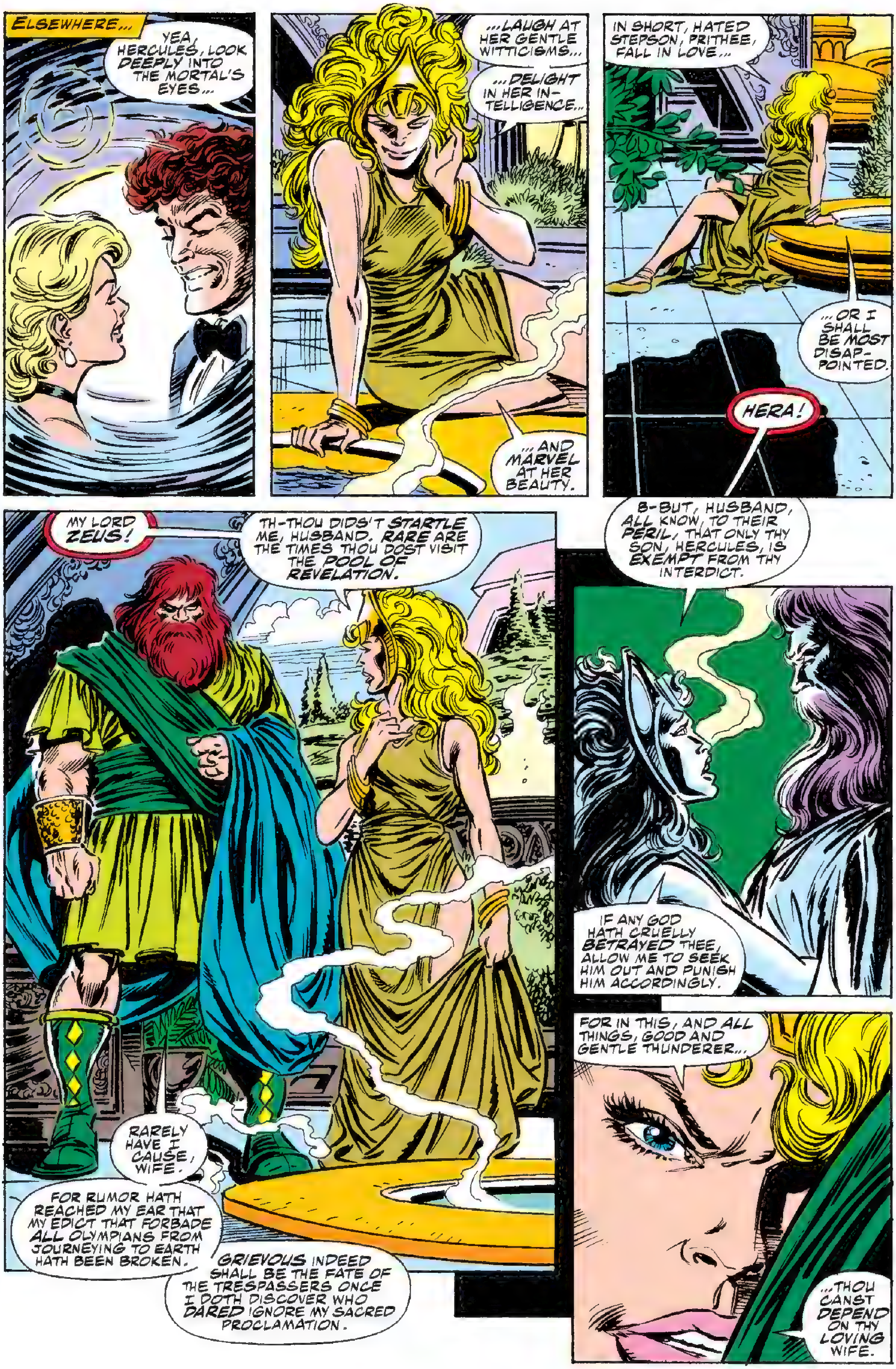

NATASHA, I HAVE A PROPOSAL.
UTILIZING DATA WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED FROM WAKANDA PERTAINING TO THE COAL TIGER'S AUTOPSY, I CAN REPROGRAM THE MED-LAB'S SYNAPTIC BIO-SCANNER TO REGISTER ANOMALIES HERETOFORE BEYOND ITS CAPABILITIES.
THE SWORDSMAN NEED ONLY--
NO WAY, VISION!
YOU LEFT ME TO DIE, ROBOT! YOU WATCHED ME BLEED AND WALKED AWAY!
DEAR GOD, I EVEN CALLED TO YOU FOR HELP!
YOU ARE CONFUSED. SUCH EVENTS NEVER OCCURRED.
LIAR! YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED, VISION! I NEVER TRUSTED THAT PASTY-FACE OF YOURS! NEVER!
CALM THYSELF, MORTAL. THIS OUTBURST DOES THEE NO GOOD.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, HERCULES.
WE MAY BE ONTO SOMETHING HERE.
TELL ME... IS THIS HOW YOU REMEMBER THE VISION?
OF COURSE, KNIGHT.
HE HASN'T CHANGED.
INTERESTING.
DANE, PULL THE MEMBERSHIP RECORDS.
ONE STEP AHEAD OF YOU, MADAME CHAIRMAN.
SWORDSMAN, DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN?
I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE.
IS THIS SOME SORT OF GAME?


NO, SWORDSMAN. NO GAME AT ALL.
IT APPEARS YOU'VE STUMBLED ONTO SOMETHING, DANE.
ACTUALLY, I'M JUST TESTING A THEORY I'VE BEEN FORMULATING SINCE MARRISA DARROW DISAPPEARED,* 'TASHA.
OKAY, SWORDSMAN, WE'RE GOING TO TRY THIS AGAIN. TELL US IF THIS WOMAN IS IN ANY WAY FAMILIAR.
*SEE ISSUE #348--RALF.
NO.
SHE IS AS MUCH A STRANGER AS THE FIRST HOLOGRAM, AVENGER.
TELL ME, WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE HAVE TO DO WITH ME?
THEY HAD MUCH TO DO WITH THE SWORDSMAN WE KNEW, MY FRIEND.
DANE, ARE YOU THINKING--?
LET'S JUST SAY THERE ARE A LOT OF POSSIBILITIES HERE. AND A GOOD SCIENTIST EXPLORES THEM ALL BEFORE HE COMES UP WITH A CONCLUSION.
JUST ONE MORE, SWORDSMAN...
"...HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THIS AVENGER BEFORE?"
SWEET HEAVEN!
IT'S HER--!
MANTIS!

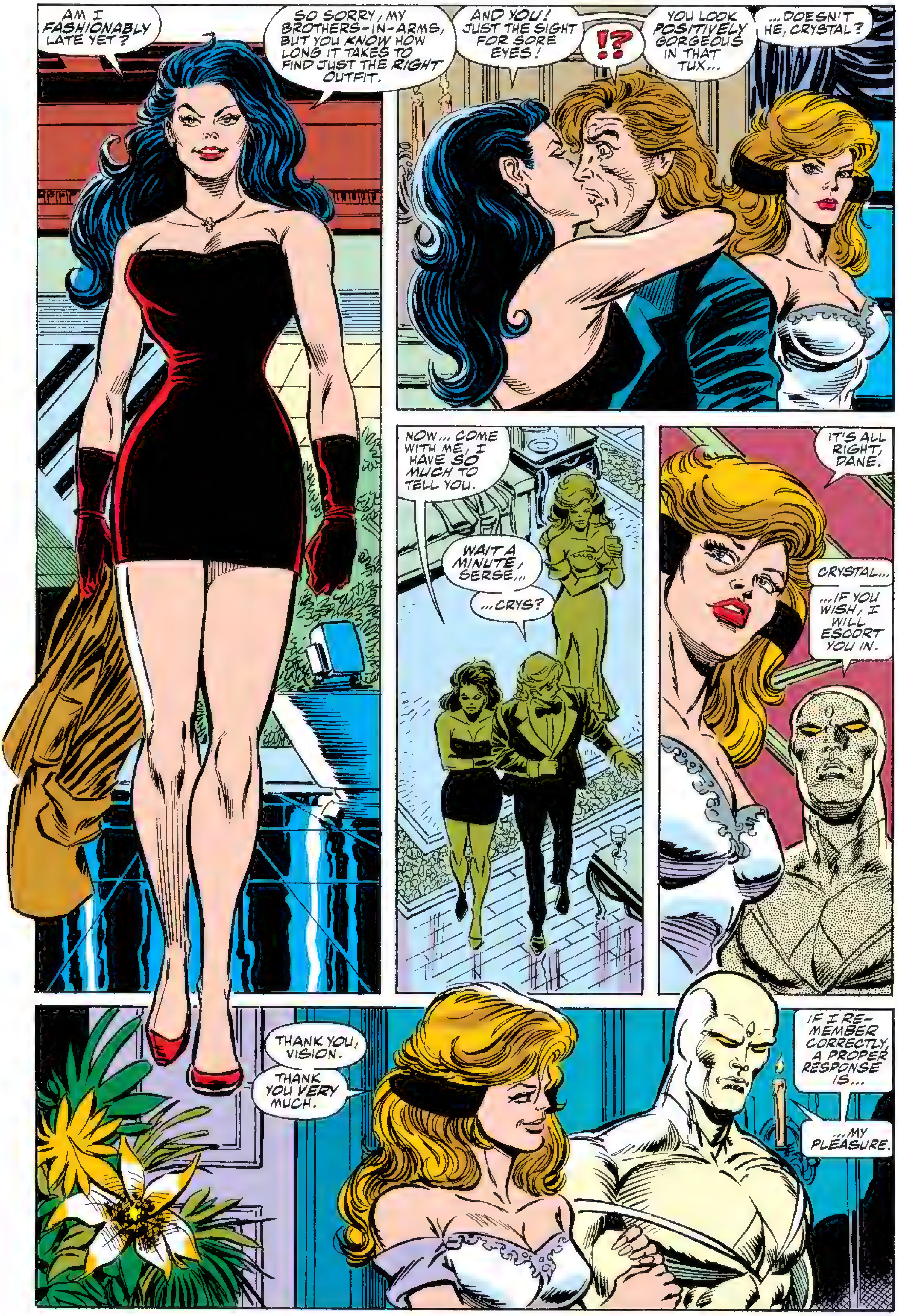

DOWNTOWN...
...IN THE SECTION OF MANHATTAN KNOWN AS SOHO...
...A LOVERS' EMBRACE.
I'M NOT THE BEGGING TYPE, BUT...
...PLEASE STAY.
YOU FLATTER ME, BUT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS.
THIS WAS A LARK... A WHIM FOR THE BOTH OF US. I THOUGHT YOU UNDERSTOOD THAT.
IN ANY EVENT, I HAVE PLACES TO GO -- YES, MANY PLACES TO GO.
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW... AND PEOPLE TO SEE, RIGHT?
C'MON, DON'T HAND ME THAT! YOU MAY PRETEND YOU DON'T CARE, BUT WE HAVE SOMETHING GOOD HERE.
DON'T RUIN IT BY LEAVING.
I'M SURE YOU WON'T BELIEVE ME, BUT IT IS BEST I LEAVE NOW.
YOU'RE RIGHT -- I DON'T.
HMMMM...
YOU ARE A PERSUASIVE BOY, AREN'T YOU?
ALL RIGHT, I'LL STAY A LITTLE LONGER...
...BUT DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU!


AVENGERS MANSION.
LATER...
IN BUT A MOMENT, GOOD KNIGHT.
AREN'T YOU READY YET, HERCULES?
THOUGH I DOTH BLUSH TO ADMIT IT, I FIND THE WORKINGS OF A BOW TIE MOST... CONFOUNDING.
YOU AND ME BOTH, BUD.
TELL ME, HOW FARES THE SWORDSMAN? I AM CONCERNED FOR HIM.
TRUTH TO TELL, HERK, SO AM I.
HE'S RESTING NOW. THE DOCTOR GAVE HIM A SEDATIVE.
POOR GUY. I DOUBTED HIS STORY IN THE BEGINNING, BUT NOT NOW.
EVERYTHING MATCHES THE SWORDSMAN WE KNEW. FINGERPRINTS, DNA, RETINAL SCAN...
...EVERYTHING.
JUST AS THE COAL TIGER'S BIO-SCANS MATCHED T'CHALLA'S. AND, I'M SURE, JUST AS MARRISA DARROW'S WOULD HAVE DUPLICATED MAGDALENE'S.
I THINK HE IS THE SWORDSMAN... BUT FROM ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE.
ANOTHER REALITY, IF YOU WILL. ONE THAT PARALLELS OURS, BUT DOESN'T QUITE MATCH IT.
BUT HOW DID HE COME HERE? AND WHY ARE HIS FELLOW GATHERERS DETERMINED TO DESTROY OUR NOBLE ASSEMBLAGE?
GOOD QUESTIONS, HERK. BUT I DON'T THINK NOW'S QUITE THE TIME FOR THEM...
...DO YOU?
HELLO, HERCULES.
IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

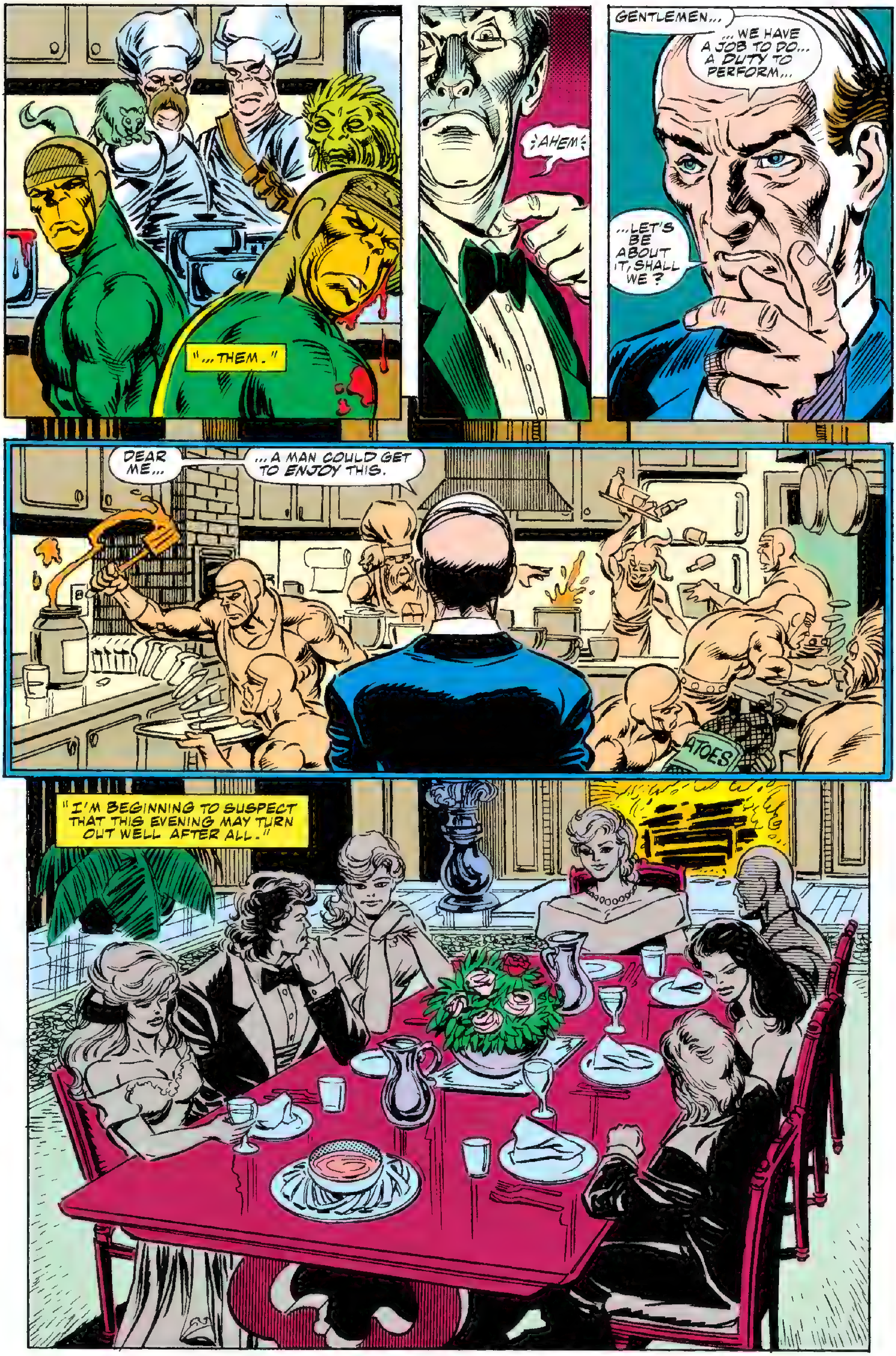

YOU *SHAVED* YOUR BEARD!
AYE...
...APPARENTLY IT HATH BEEN THE MOST *CONTROVERSIAL* THING I'VE DONE FOR SOME TIME...
...DOST THOU APPROVE?
SO *THAT'S* THE FAMOUS TAYLOR MADISON, EH, VIZH?
I THINK NATASHA'S *MATCHMAKING* MIGHT JUST WORK OUT.
AND WHERE ARE THE BLACK WIDOW AND CRYSTAL?
PROBABLY PRIMPING IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR.
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN, HERK! WOMEN ARE A *THOUSAND* TIMES W--
AHEM
I THINK YOU SHOULD STOP THERE, DANE...
...BEFORE YOU SAY SOMETHING *YOU KNOW* YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET.
WHOA

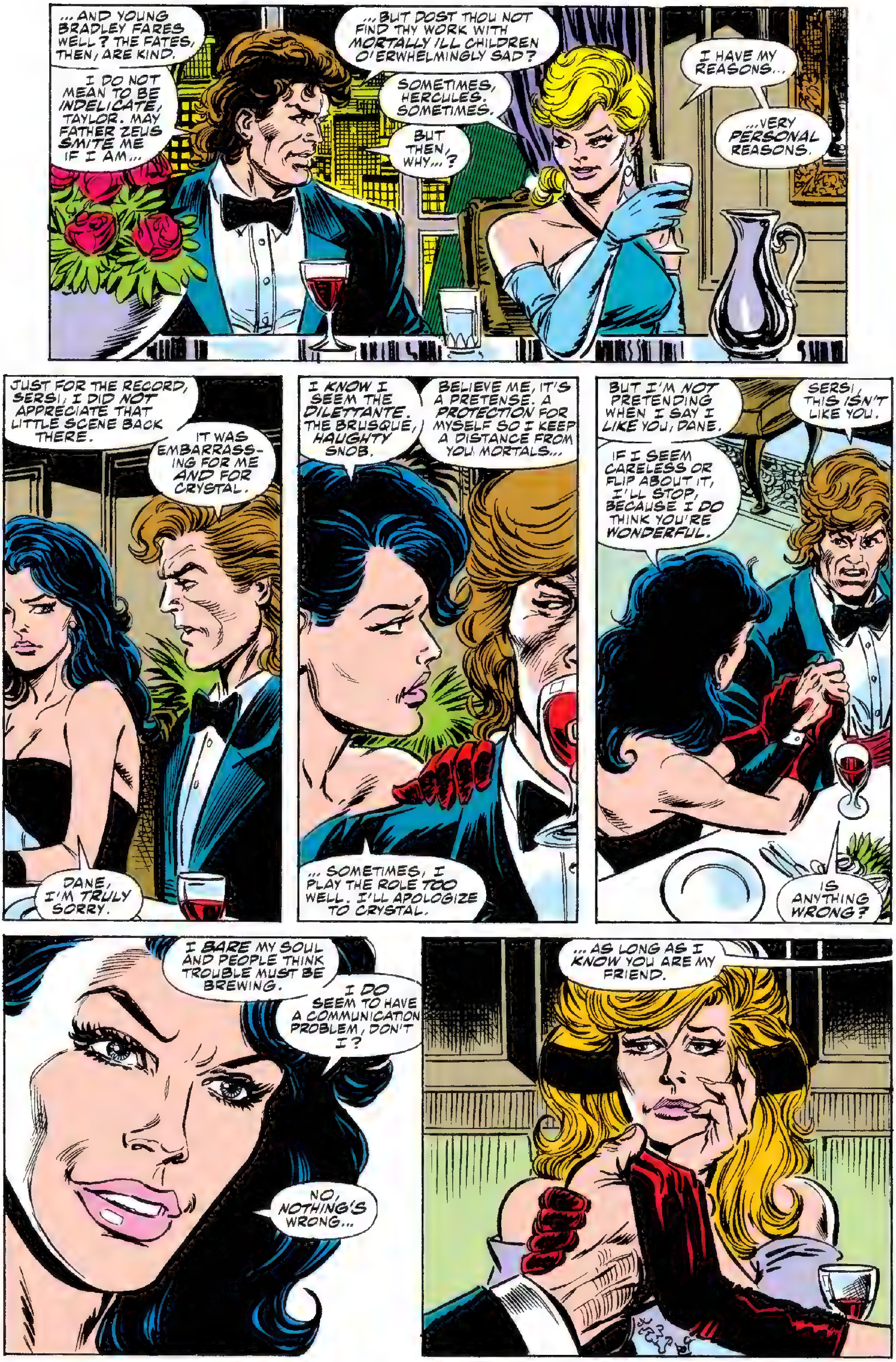

ELSEWHERE...
YEA, HERCULES, LOOK DEEPLY INTO THE MORTAL'S EYES...
...LAUGH AT HER GENTLE WITTICISMS...
...DELIGHT IN HER INTELLIGENCE...
...AND MARVEL AT HER BEAUTY.
IN SHORT, HATED STEPSON, PRITHEE, FALL IN LOVE...
...OR I SHALL BE MOST DISAPPOINTED.
HERA!
MY LORD ZEUS!
TH-THOU DIDS'T STARTLE ME, HUSBAND. RARE ARE THE TIMES THOU DOST VISIT THE POOL OF REVELATION.
RARELY HAVE I CAUSE, WIFE.
FOR RUMOR HATH REACHED MY EAR THAT MY EDICT THAT FORBADE ALL OLYMPIANS FROM JOURNEYING TO EARTH HATH BEEN BROKEN.
GRIEVOUS INDEED SHALL BE THE FATE OF THE TRESPASSERS ONCE I DOTH DISCOVER WHO DARED IGNORE MY SACRED PROCLAMATION.
B-BUT, HUSBAND, ALL KNOW, TO THEIR PERIL, THAT ONLY THY SON, HERCULES, IS EXEMPT FROM THY INTERDICT.
IF ANY GOD HATH CRUELLY BETRAYED THEE, ALLOW ME TO SEEK HIM OUT AND PUNISH HIM ACCORDINGLY.
FOR IN THIS, AND ALL THINGS, GOOD AND GENTLE THUNDERER...
...THOU CANST DEPEND ON THY LOVING WIFE.

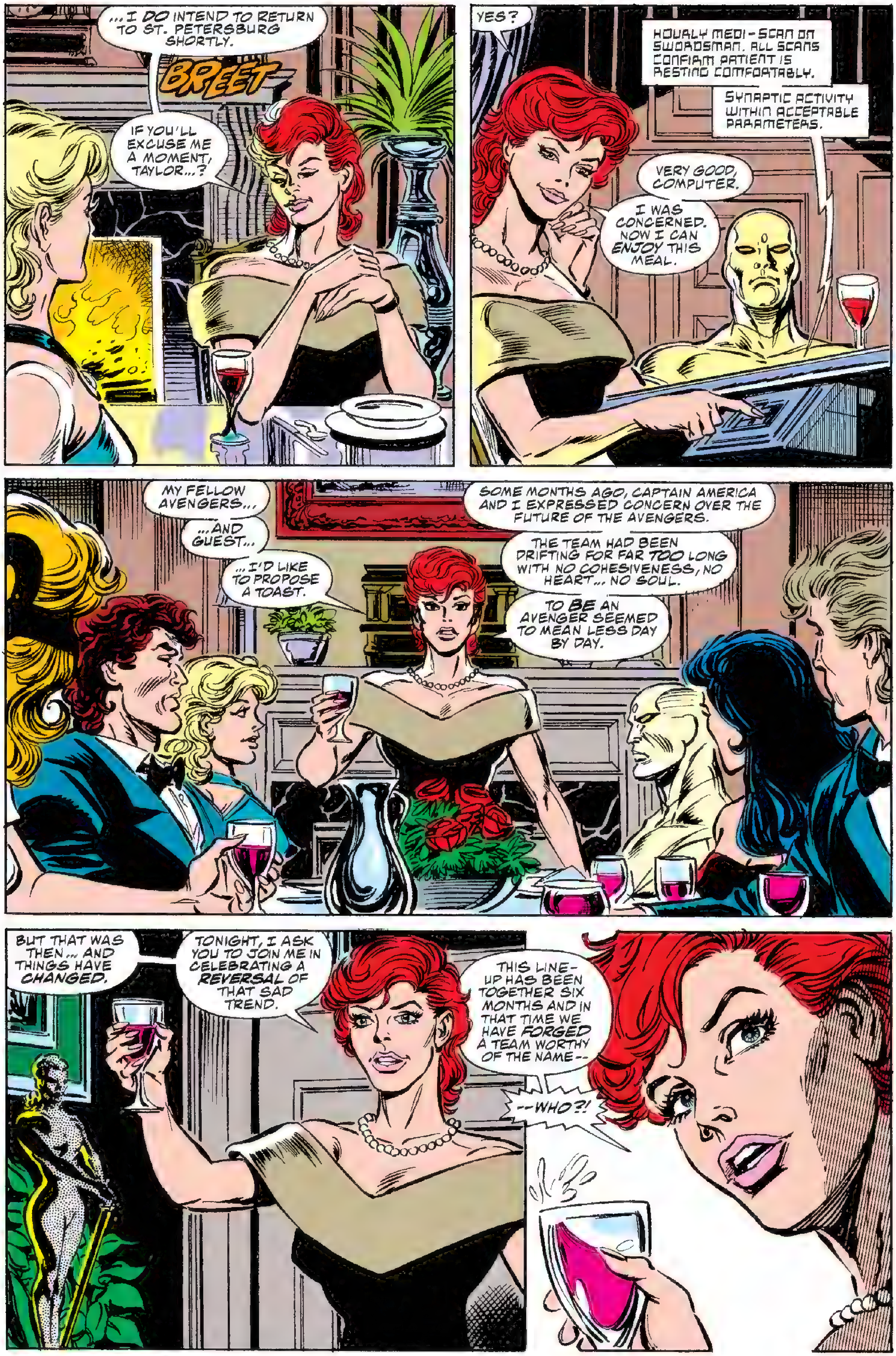
A UNIVERSE... A BREATH AWAY FROM MOUNT OLYMPUS...
...THOR HATH BEEN CALLED AWAY ON AN ERRAND MOST URGENT. *
INDEED, I DO MISS HIS MERRY COMPANY.
HE'S *VERY* LUCKY TO HAVE A FRIEND LIKE YOU, HERCULES.
YOU SAVED HIS LIFE WHEN HE WAS POSSESSED BY ARES. **
THANK YOU!
WELL, THINGS SEEM TO BE GOING EXCEEDINGLY WELL OVER THERE...
...IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF!
ARE WE ALL HERE? DINNER SHOULD BE READY SOON.
SERSI HAS NOT YET ARRIVED, NATASHA.
*CHECK OUT THOR'S OWN BOOK--RALF.
**ISSUE #349--RALF-ETH.
HMMM. I KNOW WE'RE ALL FREE AGENTS, VISION...
...BUT SOMETHING ABOUT SERSI'S *ERRATIC* APPEARANCES WORRIES ME.
ADMITTEDLY, HER HISTORY AND PERSONAL TRAITS MAKE HER AN UNLIKELY AVENGER...
...BUT I SEE NO REASON FOR CONCERN AS OF YET.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN--
SWIIISH!
MORE WINE? MORE WINE? PLENTY I HAVE!
⁏SIGH⁏
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DINNER...
...AND I USE THE TERM EXTREMELY LOOSELY...
...IS SERVED.
MAY I ESCORT THEE IN?
I'M *REALLY* NOT USED TO ALL THIS FORMALITY.
THOU ART AS *ELEGANT*, SWEET LADY, AS *ANY* GODDESS BORN.
HOWZABOUT IT, CRYSTAL?
CAN I MAKE UP FOR BAD BEHAVIOR?
OF COURSE, DANE.

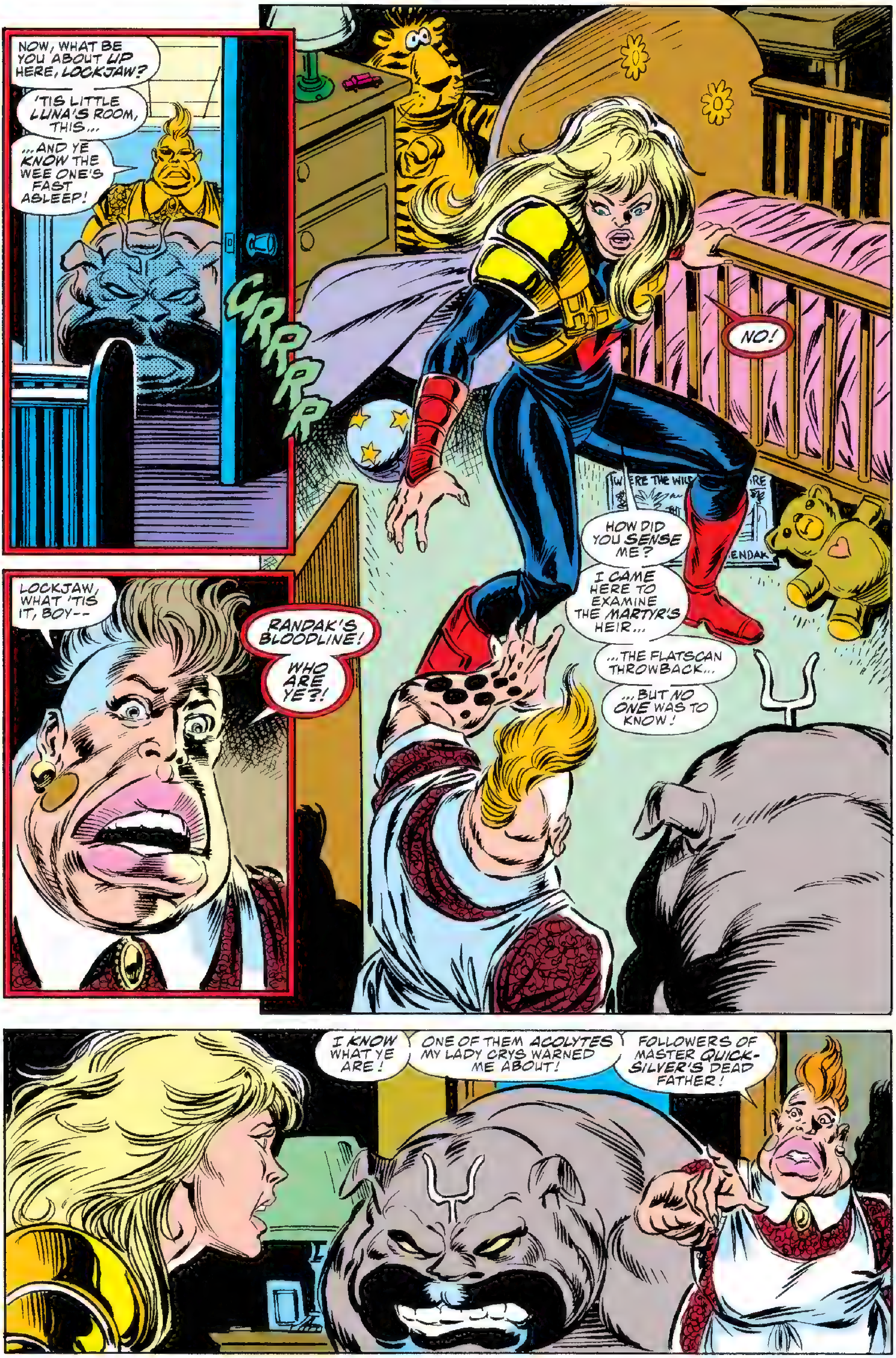

AM I FASHIONABLY LATE YET?
SO SORRY, MY BROTHERS-IN-ARMS, BUT YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT TAKES TO FIND JUST THE RIGHT OUTFIT.
AND YOU! JUST THE SIGHT FOR SORE EYES!
!?
YOU LOOK POSITIVELY GORGEOUS IN THAT TUX...
...DOESN'T HE, CRYSTAL?
NOW... COME WITH ME, I HAVE SO MUCH TO TELL YOU.
WAIT A MINUTE, SERSE...
...CRYS?
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DANE.
CRYSTAL...
...IF YOU WISH, I WILL ESCORT YOU IN.
THANK YOU, VISION.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, A PROPER RESPONSE IS...
...MY PLEASURE.

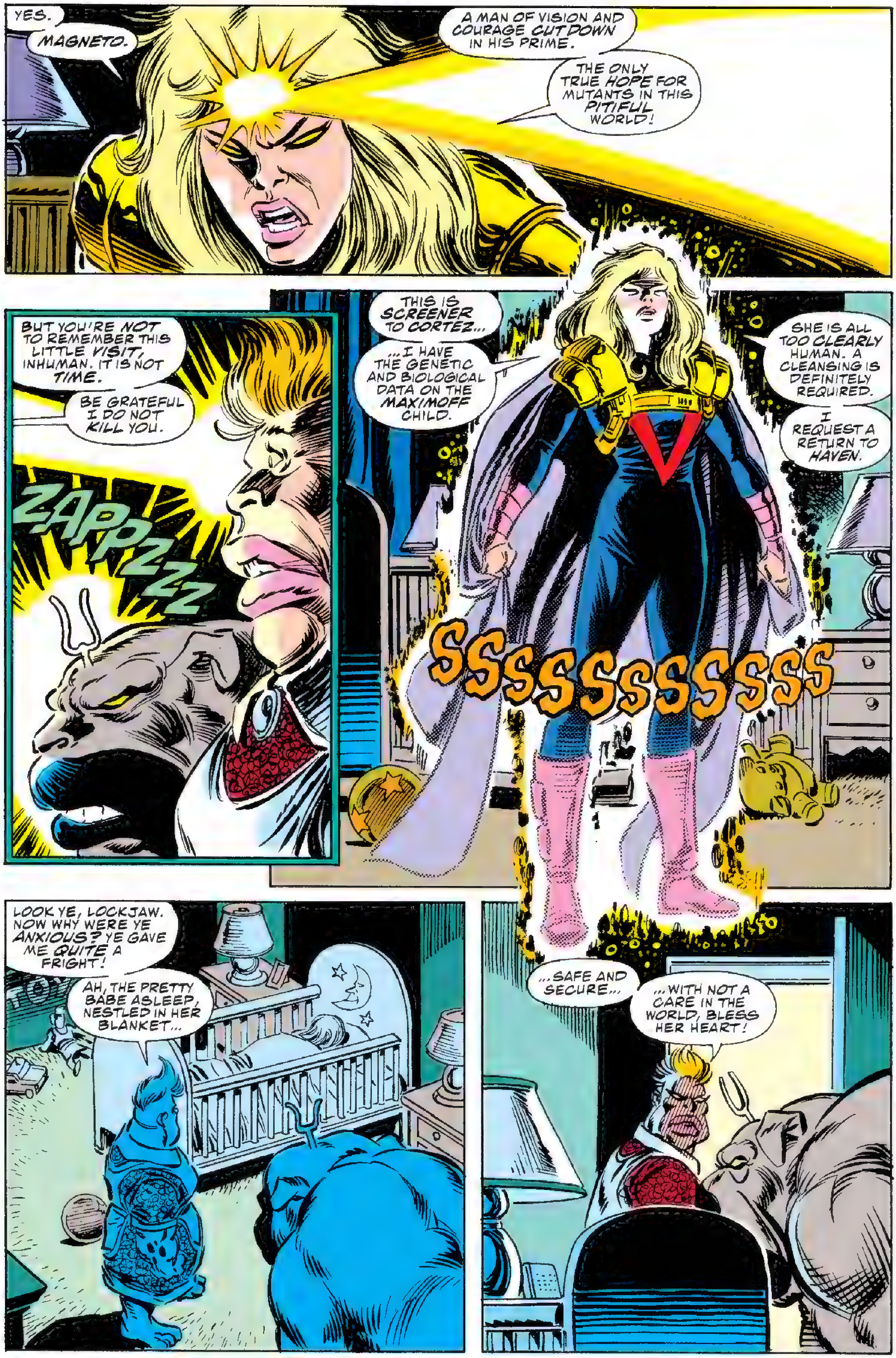
COME NOW, YE SLUGGARDS! LET'S PUT SOME LIFE INTO YE STEP!
WE'VE GOT A FEAST TO SERVE!
HOW GOES THE ORWLYIAN BLOOD PUDDING? COOK IT TOO LONG AND IT'S NOT FIT FOR THE LOWLIEST GENETIC THROWBACK--
--COOK IT TOO LITTLE AND ME MIND BOGGLES!
NOW THAT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY!
MADAME, MAY I HAVE A WORD?
AH, ME! WOULD THAT I HAD THE TIME, JONAS...
...BUT CAN'T YE SEE I HAVE A CULINARY MASTERPIECE TO SUPERVISE?
WHAT I SEE, MARILLA, IS THAT YOU HAVE USURPED MY POSITION...
...COMMANDEERED MY KITCHEN...
GRRRR
...AND LET THIS BEAST SLOBBER ALL OVER MY WAXED FLOOR!
VERY NICE, MR. FANCYPANTS!
YE'VE GONE AN' HURT THE BEASTIE'S FEEL-INGS!
OH, DEAR!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO! I WAS MERELY VENTING!
NEVER YE MIND!
I'LL GO FETCH THE PUP...
...IN THE MEANWHILE, YE BE IN CHARGE, JEBEDIAH.
ME?
BUT, MARILLA, I'VE NO IDEA HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH...

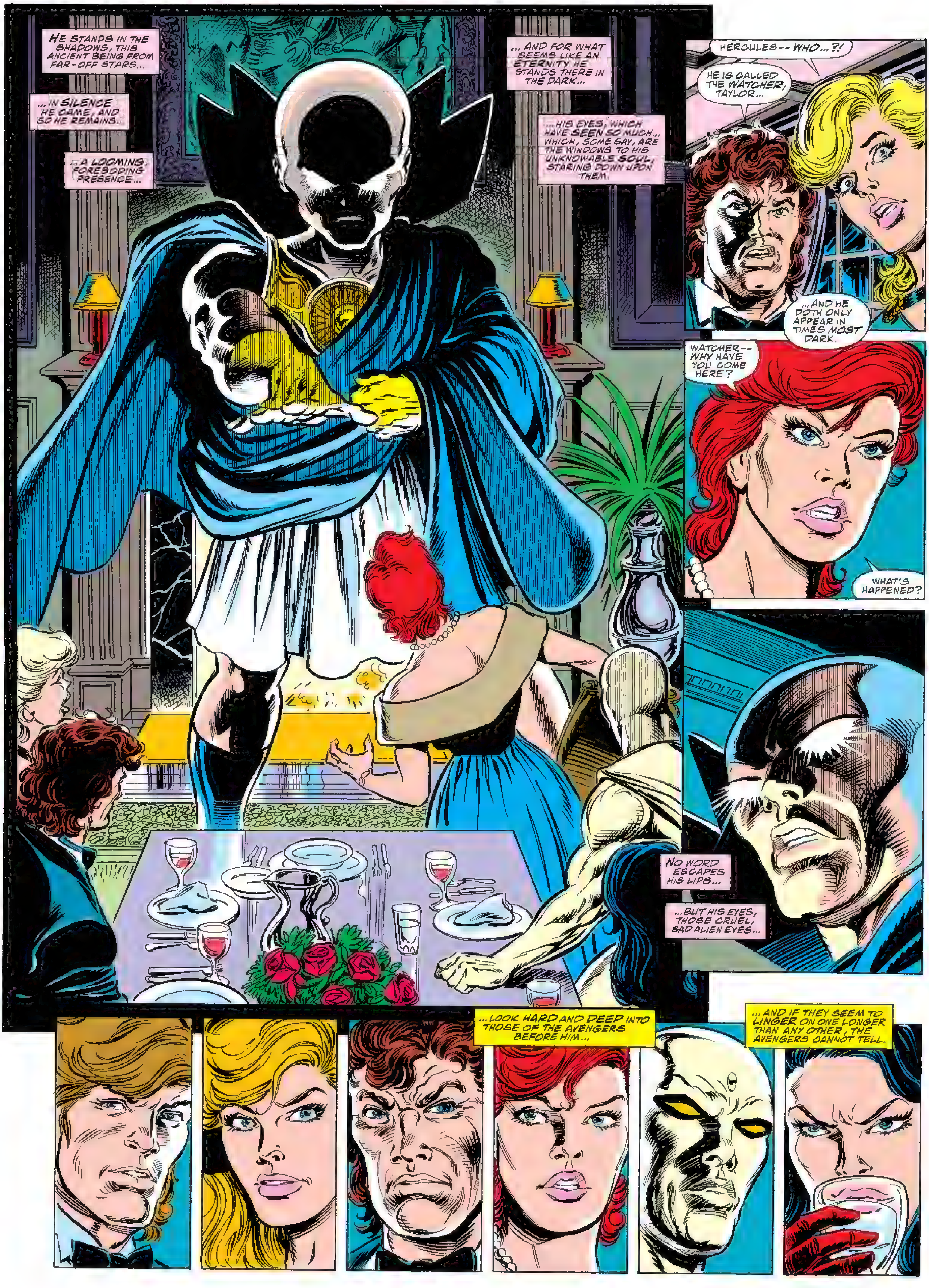

"...THEM."
AHEM
GENTLEMEN...
...WE HAVE A JOB TO DO... A DUTY TO PERFORM...
...LET'S BE ABOUT IT, SHALL WE?
DEAR ME...
...A MAN COULD GET TO ENJOY THIS.
ATOES
"I'M BEGINNING TO SUSPECT THAT THIS EVENING MAY TURN OUT WELL AFTER ALL."

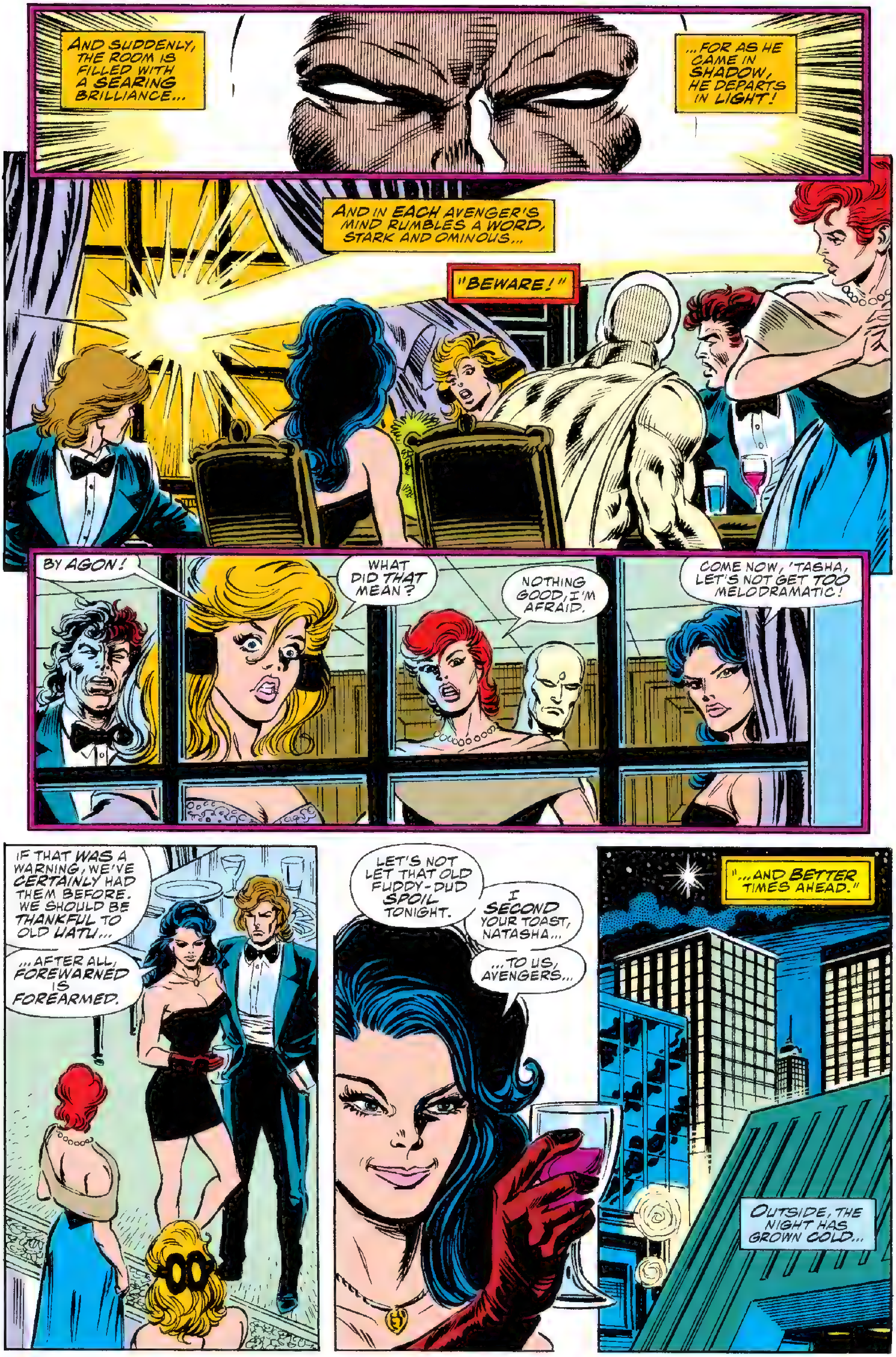

...AND YOUNG BRADLEY FARES WELL? THE FATES, THEN, ARE KIND.
I DO NOT MEAN TO BE *INDELICATE*, TAYLOR. MAY FATHER ZEUS *SMITE* ME IF I AM...
...BUT DOST THOU NOT FIND THY WORK WITH *MORTALLY ILL* CHILDREN O'ERWHELMINGLY SAD?
SOMETIMES, HERCULES. SOMETIMES.
BUT THEN, WHY...?
I HAVE MY REASONS...
...VERY *PERSONAL* REASONS.
JUST FOR THE RECORD, SERSI, I DID *NOT* APPRECIATE THAT LITTLE SCENE BACK THERE.
IT WAS EMBARRASSING FOR ME *AND* FOR CRYSTAL.
DANE, I'M *TRULY* SORRY.
I *KNOW* I SEEM THE *DILETTANTE*. THE BRUSQUE, *HAUGHTY* SNOB.
BELIEVE ME, IT'S A PRETENSE. A *PROTECTION* FOR MYSELF SO I KEEP A DISTANCE FROM YOU MORTALS...
...SOMETIMES, I PLAY THE ROLE *TOO* WELL. I'LL APOLOGIZE TO CRYSTAL.
BUT I'M *NOT* PRETENDING WHEN I SAY I *LIKE* YOU, DANE.
IF I SEEM CARELESS OR FLIP ABOUT IT, I'LL STOP, BECAUSE I *DO* THINK YOU'RE *WONDERFUL*.
SERSI, THIS *ISN'T* LIKE YOU.
IS ANYTHING *WRONG*?
I *BARE* MY SOUL AND PEOPLE THINK TROUBLE MUST BE BREWING.
I *DO* SEEM TO HAVE A COMMUNICATION PROBLEM, DON'T I?
NO, *NOTHING'S* WRONG...
...AS LONG AS I *KNOW* YOU ARE MY FRIEND.

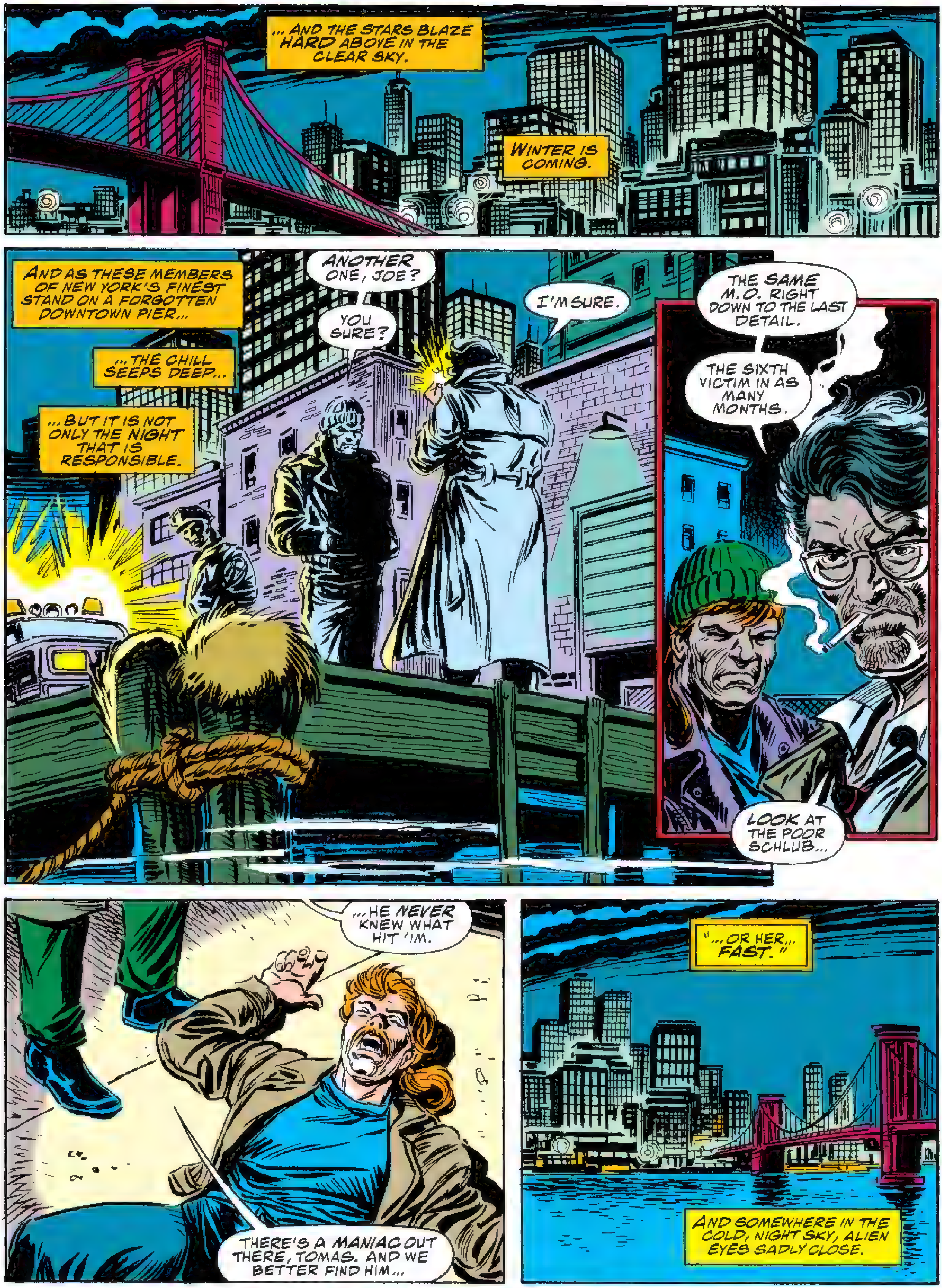

...I DO INTEND TO RETURN TO ST. PETERSBURG SHORTLY.
BREET
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME A MOMENT, TAYLOR...?
YES?
HOURLY MEDI-SCAN ON SWORDSMAN. ALL SCANS CONFIRM PATIENT IS RESTING COMFORTABLY.
SYNAPTIC ACTIVITY WITHIN ACCEPTABLE PARAMETERS.
VERY GOOD, COMPUTER.
I WAS CONCERNED. NOW I CAN ENJOY THIS MEAL.
MY FELLOW AVENGERS...
...AND GUEST...
...I'D LIKE TO PROPOSE A TOAST.
SOME MONTHS AGO, CAPTAIN AMERICA AND I EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE FUTURE OF THE AVENGERS.
THE TEAM HAD BEEN DRIFTING FOR FAR TOO LONG WITH NO COHESIVENESS, NO HEART... NO SOUL.
TO BE AN AVENGER SEEMED TO MEAN LESS DAY BY DAY.
BUT THAT WAS THEN... AND THINGS HAVE CHANGED.
TONIGHT, I ASK YOU TO JOIN ME IN CELEBRATING A REVERSAL OF THAT SAD TREND.
THIS LINE-UP HAS BEEN TOGETHER SIX MONTHS AND IN THAT TIME WE HAVE FORGED A TEAM WORTHY OF THE NAME--
--WHO?!


NOW, WHAT BE YOU ABOUT *UP* HERE, *LOCKJAW*?
'TIS LITTLE *LUNA'S* ROOM, THIS...
...AND YE *KNOW* THE WEE ONE'S FAST ASLEEP!
GRRRRR
NO!
WHERE THE WIL
ENDAK
HOW DID YOU *SENSE* ME?
I CAME HERE TO EXAMINE THE *MARTYR'S* HEIR...
...THE FLATSCAN THROWBACK...
...BUT *NO ONE* WAS TO KNOW!
LOCKJAW, WHAT 'TIS IT, BOY--
RANDAK'S BLOODLINE!
WHO ARE YE?!
I *KNOW* WHAT YE ARE!
ONE OF THEM *ACOLYTES* MY LADY CRYS WARNED ME ABOUT!
FOLLOWERS OF MASTER *QUICK-SILVER'S* DEAD FATHER!


YES.
MAGNETO.
A MAN OF VISION AND COURAGE *CUT DOWN* IN HIS PRIME.
THE ONLY TRUE *HOPE* FOR MUTANTS IN THIS *PITIFUL* WORLD!
BUT YOU'RE *NOT* TO REMEMBER THIS LITTLE *VISIT,* INHUMAN. IT IS NOT *TIME.*
BE GRATEFUL I DO NOT *KILL* YOU.
ZAPPZZZ
THIS IS *SCREENER* TO *CORTEZ...*
...I HAVE THE GENETIC AND BIOLOGICAL DATA ON THE *MAXIMOFF* CHILD.
SHE IS ALL TOO *CLEARLY* HUMAN. A CLEANSING IS DEFINITELY REQUIRED.
I REQUEST A RETURN TO *HAVEN.*
SSSSSSSSSSSSS
LOOK YE, LOCKJAW. NOW WHY WERE YE *ANXIOUS?* YE GAVE ME *QUITE* A FRIGHT!
AH, THE PRETTY BABE ASLEEP, NESTLED IN HER BLANKET...
...SAFE AND SECURE...
...WITH NOT A CARE IN THE WORLD, BLESS HER HEART!


HE STANDS IN THE SHADOWS, THIS ANCIENT BEING FROM FAR-OFF STARS...
...IN SILENCE HE CAME, AND SO HE REMAINS...
...A LOOMING, FOREBODING PRESENCE...
...AND FOR WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY HE STANDS THERE IN THE DARK...
...HIS EYES, WHICH HAVE SEEN SO MUCH... WHICH, SOME SAY, ARE THE WINDOWS TO HIS UNKNOWABLE SOUL, STARING DOWN UPON THEM.
HERCULES--WHO...?!
HE IS CALLED THE WATCHER, TAYLOR...
...AND HE DOTH ONLY APPEAR IN TIMES MOST DARK.
WATCHER--WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?
WHAT'S HAPPENED?
NO WORD ESCAPES HIS LIPS...
...BUT HIS EYES, THOSE CRUEL, SAD ALIEN EYES...
...LOOK HARD AND DEEP INTO THOSE OF THE AVENGERS BEFORE HIM...
...AND IF THEY SEEM TO LINGER ON ONE LONGER THAN ANY OTHER, THE AVENGERS CANNOT TELL.

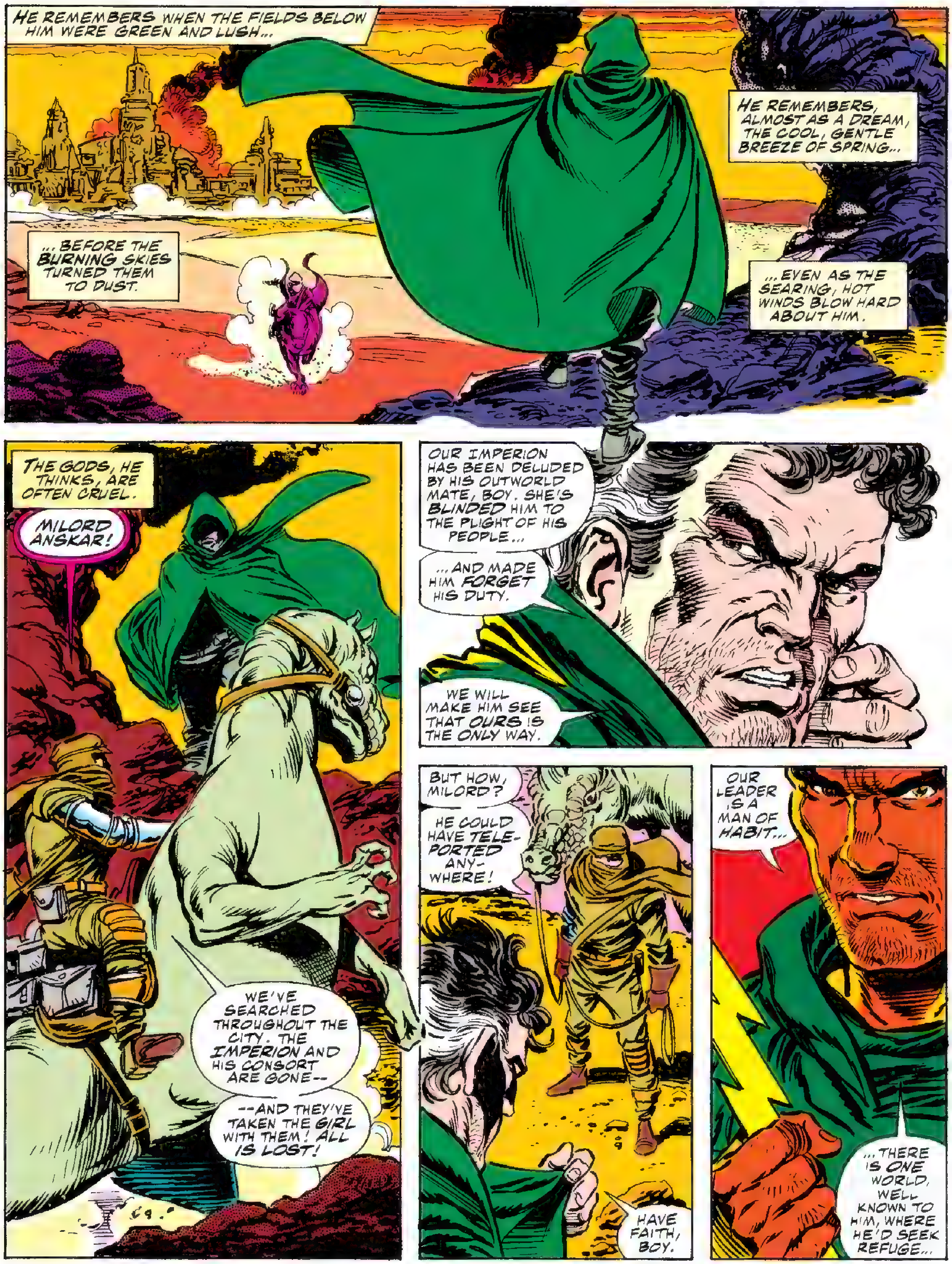

AND SUDDENLY, THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH A SEARING BRILLIANCE...
...FOR AS HE CAME IN SHADOW, HE DEPARTS IN LIGHT!
AND IN EACH AVENGER'S MIND RUMBLES A WORD, STARK AND OMINOUS...
"BEWARE!"
BY AGON!
WHAT DID THAT MEAN?
NOTHING GOOD, I'M AFRAID.
COME NOW, 'TASHA, LET'S NOT GET TOO MELODRAMATIC!
IF THAT WAS A WARNING, WE'VE CERTAINLY HAD THEM BEFORE. WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL TO OLD UATU...
...AFTER ALL, FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED.
LET'S NOT LET THAT OLD FUDDY-DUD SPOIL TONIGHT.
I SECOND YOUR TOAST, NATASHA...
...TO US, AVENGERS...
"...AND BETTER TIMES AHEAD."
OUTSIDE, THE NIGHT HAS GROWN COLD...

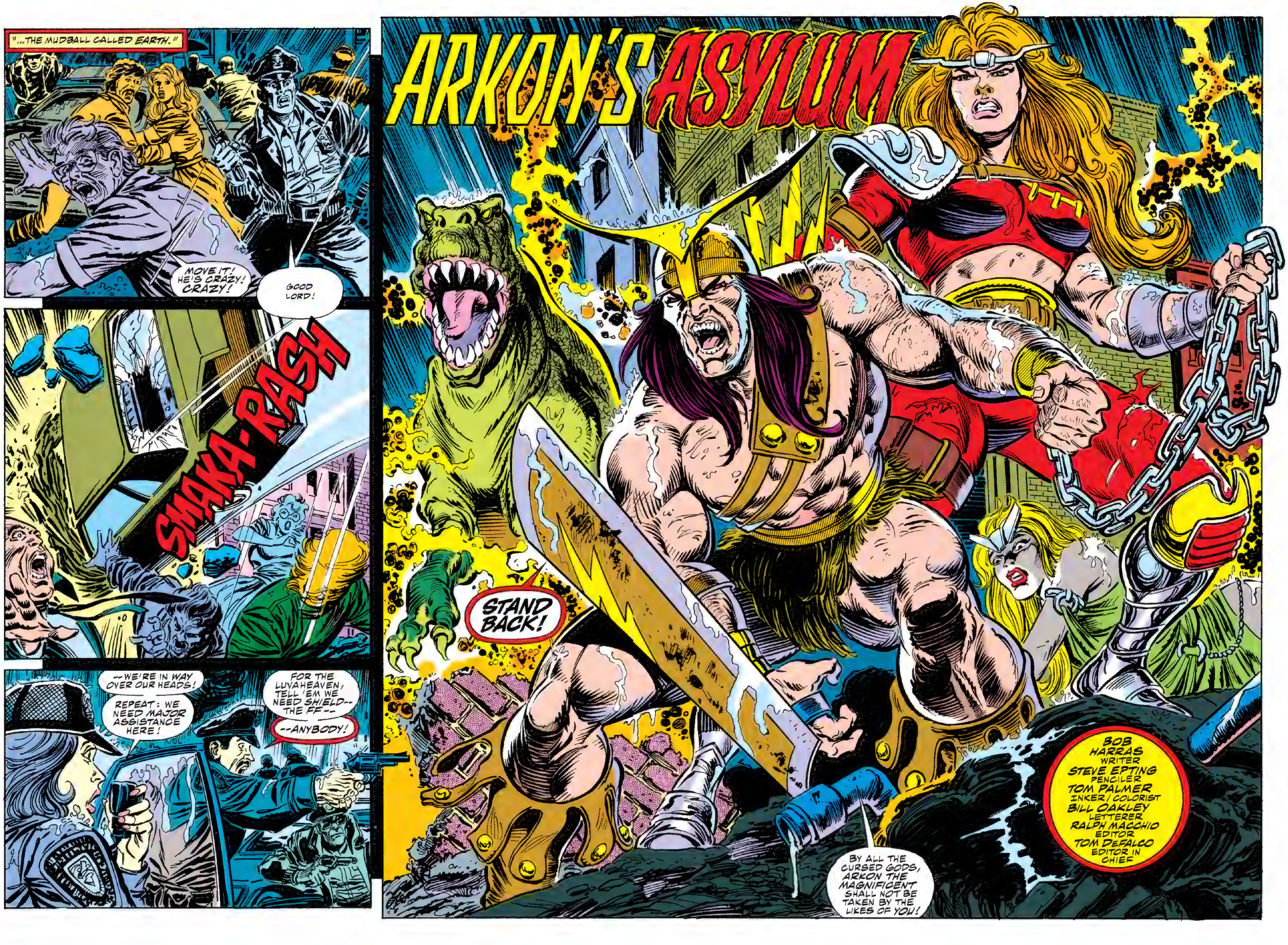

...AND THE STARS BLAZE HARD ABOVE IN THE CLEAR SKY.
WINTER IS COMING.
AND AS THESE MEMBERS OF NEW YORK'S FINEST STAND ON A FORGOTTEN DOWNTOWN PIER...
...THE CHILL SEEPS DEEP...
...BUT IT IS NOT ONLY THE NIGHT THAT IS RESPONSIBLE.
ANOTHER ONE, JOE?
YOU SURE?
I'M SURE.
THE SAME M.O. RIGHT DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL.
THE SIXTH VICTIM IN AS MANY MONTHS.
LOOK AT THE POOR SCHLUB...
...HE NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT 'IM.
THERE'S A MANIAC OUT THERE, TOMAS. AND WE BETTER FIND HIM...
"...OR HER... FAST."
AND SOMEWHERE IN THE COLD, NIGHT SKY, ALIEN EYES SADLY CLOSE.

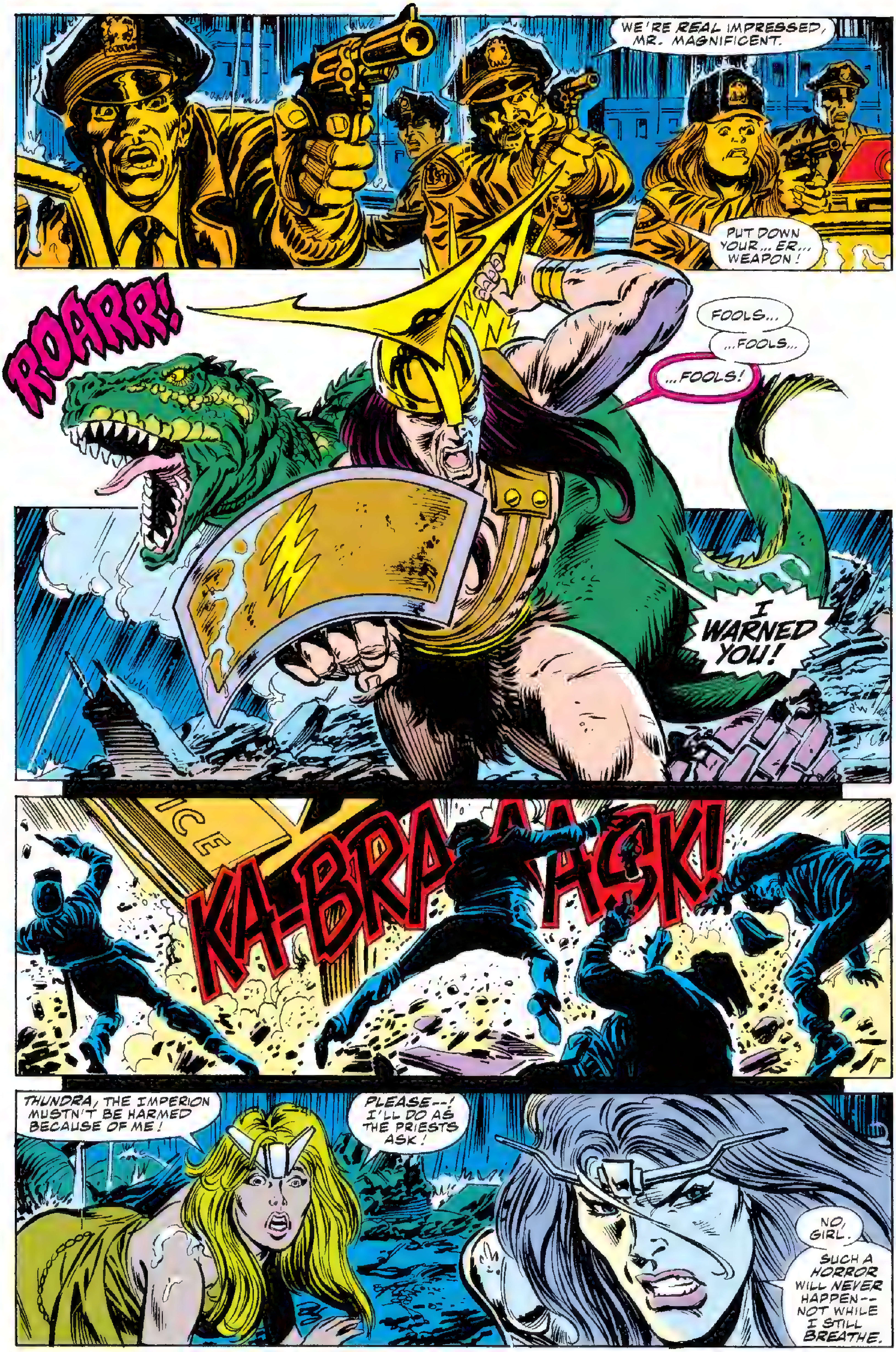
NEXT: ARKON'S ASYLUM

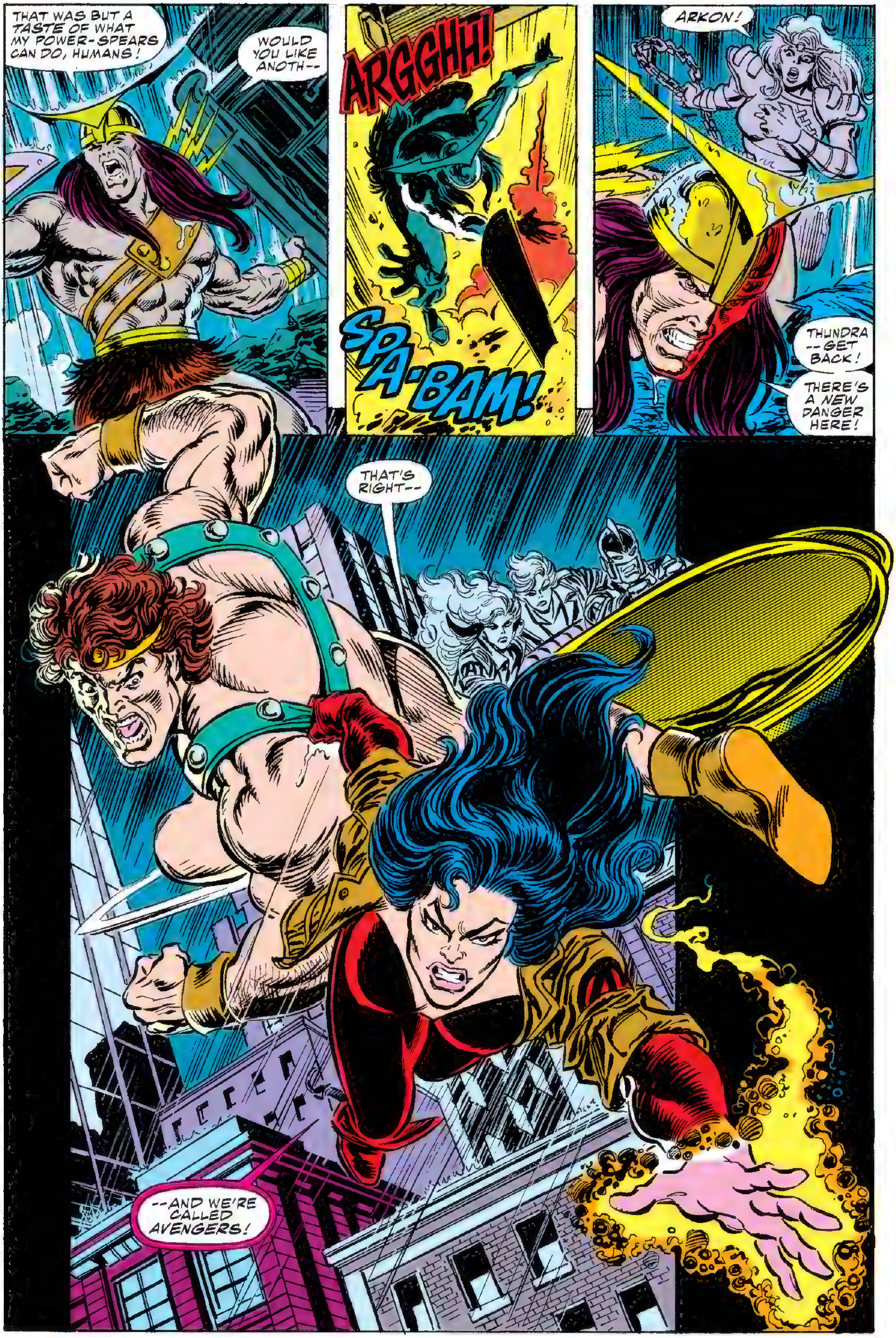
MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
©1992 MARVEL ENT. GROUP INC.
$1.80 AUS
358
APR
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ASSAULT ON ARKON
EPTING • PALMER

TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!


HE REMEMBERS WHEN THE FIELDS BELOW HIM WERE GREEN AND LUSH...
...BEFORE THE BURNING SKIES TURNED THEM TO DUST.
HE REMEMBERS, ALMOST AS A DREAM, THE COOL, GENTLE BREEZE OF SPRING...
...EVEN AS THE SEARING, HOT WINDS BLOW HARD ABOUT HIM.
THE GODS, HE THINKS, ARE OFTEN CRUEL.
MILORD ANSKAR!
WE'VE SEARCHED THROUGHOUT THE CITY. THE IMPERION AND HIS CONSORT ARE GONE--
--AND THEY'VE TAKEN THE GIRL WITH THEM! ALL IS LOST!
OUR IMPERION HAS BEEN DELUDED BY HIS OUTWORLD MATE, BOY. SHE'S BLINDED HIM TO THE PLIGHT OF HIS PEOPLE...
...AND MADE HIM FORGET HIS DUTY.
WE WILL MAKE HIM SEE THAT OURS IS THE ONLY WAY.
BUT HOW, MILORD?
HE COULD HAVE TELEPORTED ANYWHERE!
HAVE FAITH, BOY.
OUR LEADER IS A MAN OF HABIT...
...THERE IS ONE WORLD, WELL KNOWN TO HIM, WHERE HE'D SEEK REFUGE...


"...THE MUDBALL CALLED EARTH."
MOVE IT! HE'S CRAZY! CRAZY!
GOOD LORD!
SHAKA-RASH
--WE'RE IN WAY OVER OUR HEADS!
REPEAT: WE NEED MAJOR ASSISTANCE HERE!
FOR THE LUVAHEAVEN, TELL 'EM WE NEED SHIELD-- THE FF--
--ANYBODY!
ARKON'S ASYLUM
STAND BACK!
BY ALL THE CURSED GODS, ARKON THE MAGNIFICENT SHALL NOT BE TAKEN BY THE LIKES OF YOU!
BOB HARRAS WRITER
STEVE EPTING PENCILER
TOM PALMER INKER / COLORIST
BILL OAKLEY LETTERER
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

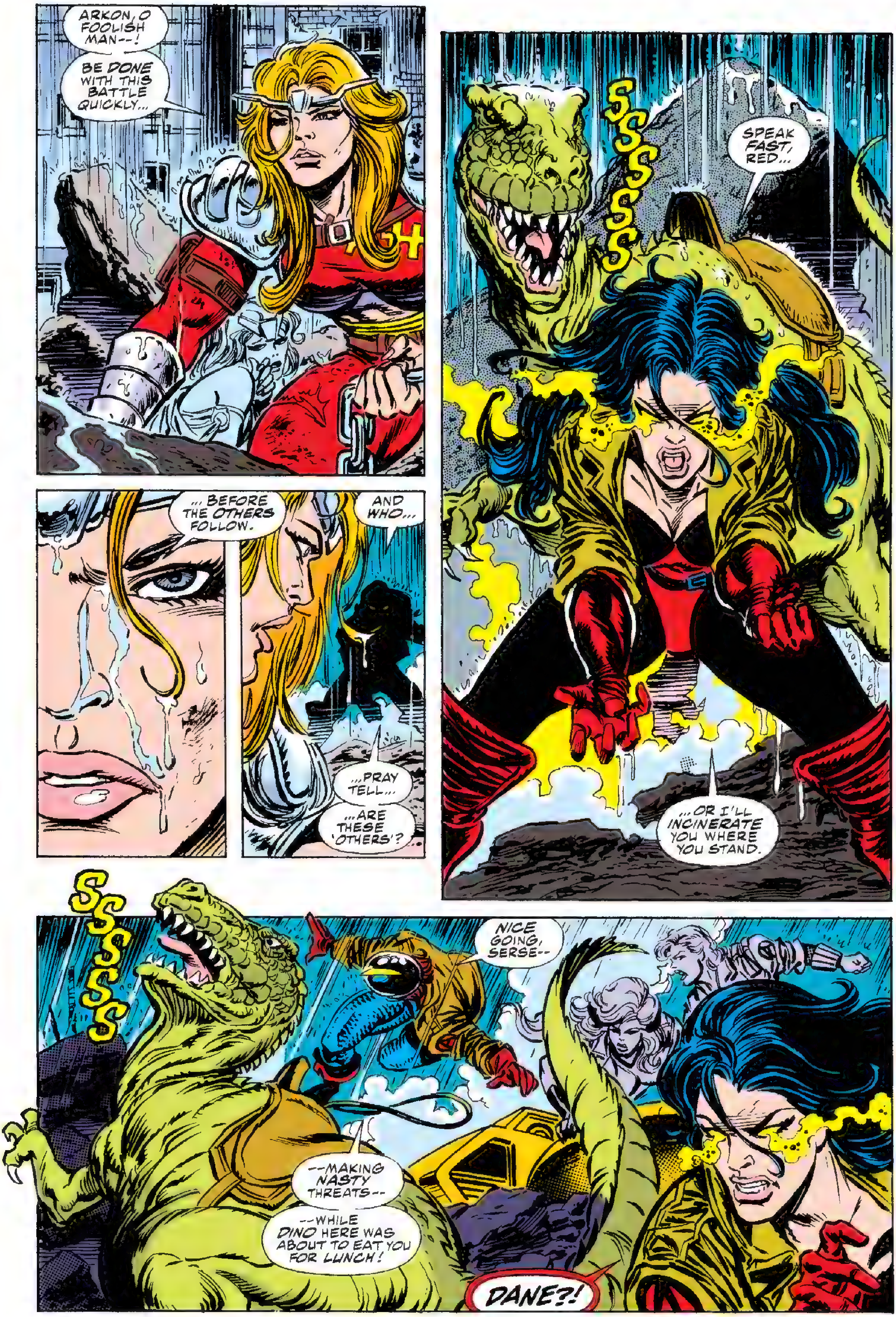

WE'RE REAL IMPRESSED, MR. MAGNIFICENT.
PUT DOWN YOUR... ER... WEAPON!
ROARR!
FOOLS...
...FOOLS...
...FOOLS!
I WARNED YOU!
KA-BRAAAASK!
THUNDRA, THE IMPERION MUSTN'T BE HARMED BECAUSE OF ME!
PLEASE--! I'LL DO AS THE PRIESTS ASK!
NO, GIRL.
SUCH A HORROR WILL NEVER HAPPEN-- NOT WHILE I STILL BREATHE.

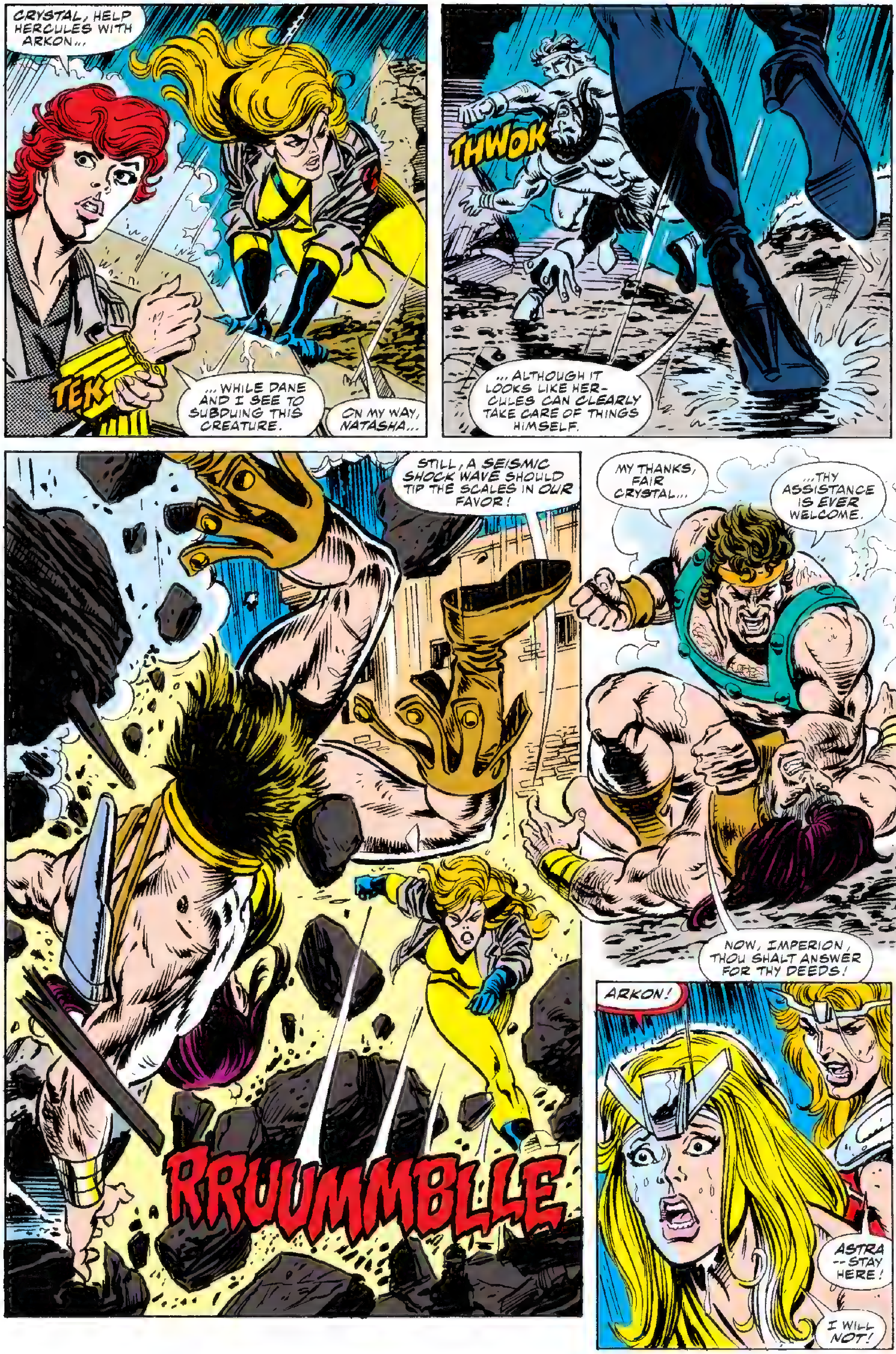

THAT WAS BUT A TASTE OF WHAT MY POWER-SPEARS CAN DO, HUMANS!
WOULD YOU LIKE ANOTH--
ARGGHH!
SPA-BAM!
ARKON!
THUNDRA --GET BACK!
THERE'S A NEW DANGER HERE!
THAT'S RIGHT--
--AND WE'RE CALLED AVENGERS!

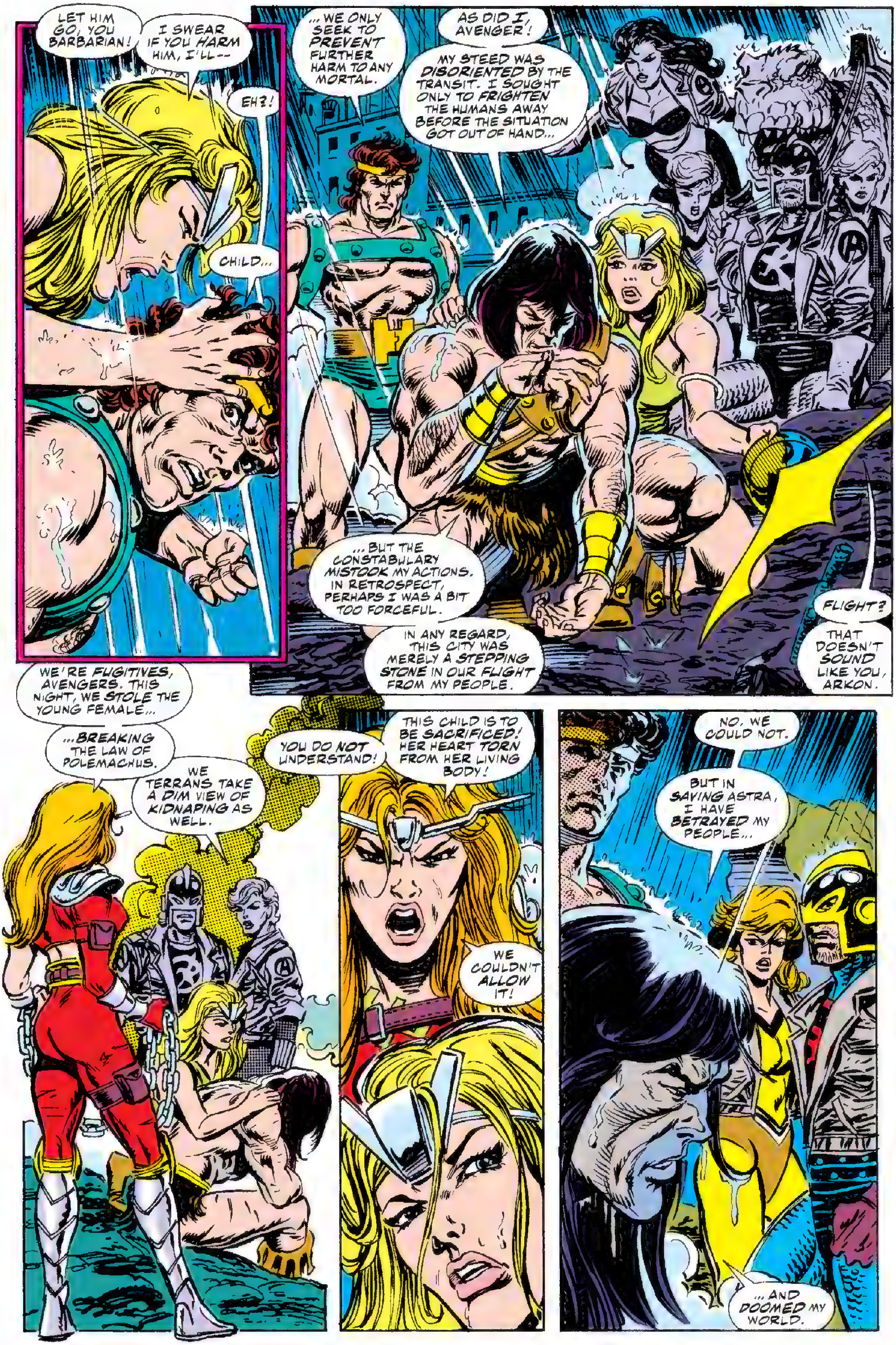
HERCULES--
--HE'S ALL YOURS!
MY THANKS, FAIR SERSI--
--'TWILL BE MY PLEASURE!
SMASH!
AVENGERS, EH?
YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS CHANGED YET AGAIN, I SEE...
...BUT IT LITTLE MATTERS...
...I HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH YOU.
WHAT?!
YOU DARE WALK AWAY FROM THE PRINCE OF POWER?
KA-SLAM!
UHNNN!

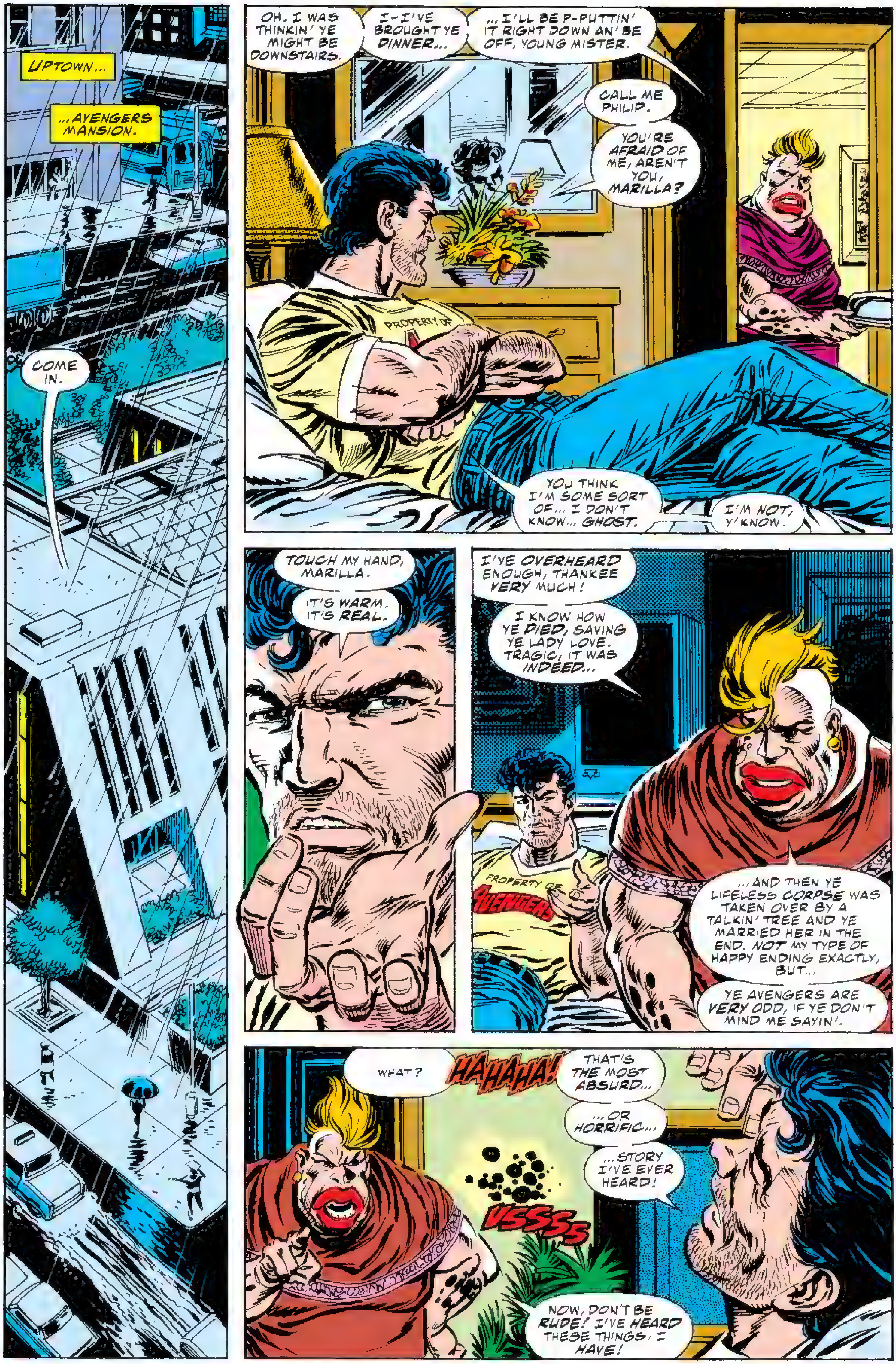
YOU THREATEN MERE MORTALS AND THEN TURN THY BACK WHEN A BEING OF EQUAL STRENGTH CONFRONTS THEE?
IS THIS COWARD, IN TRUTH, THE PROUD ARKON OF WHICH I HAVE HEARD SO MUCH?
AVENGER...
...I DON'T KNOW WHO...
...OR WHAT...
...I AM ANYMORE.
BUT NO ONE CALLS...
THWOK
...ARKON A COWARD...
PUNNT
...AND LIVES.
SAKA-BLASK
NO ONE.

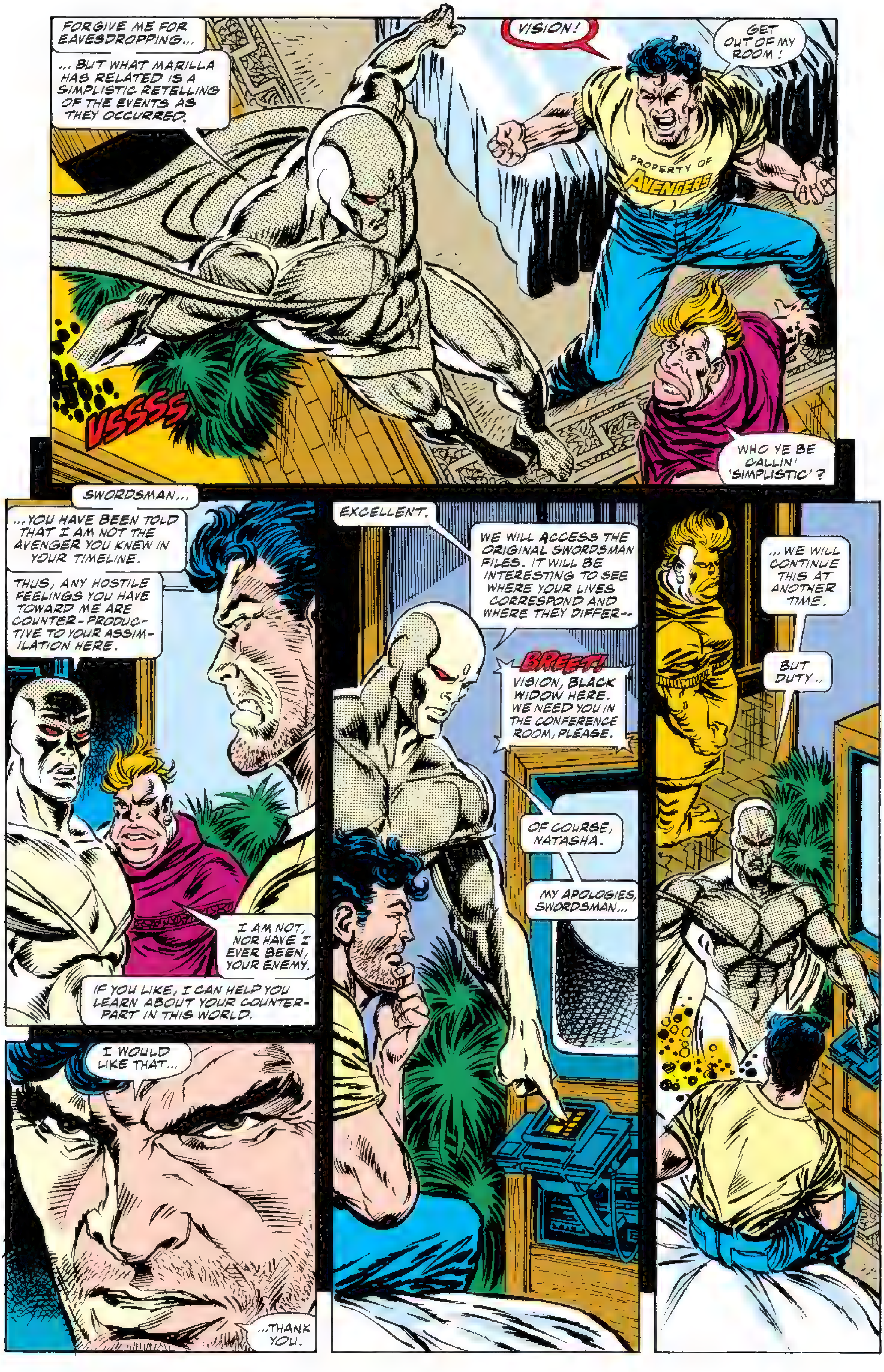
TO THAT, I MUST TAKE EXCEPTION.
BY THE ETERNAL LIGHT!
YOU STILL STAND--?!
WHY COULDN'T YOU JUST LEAVE US IN PEACE?
PEACE?
IMPERION, THY ACTIONS HERE--
--THE DESTRUCTION THOU HAST CAUSED--
--MAKE MOCKERY OF THY WORDS!
SLA-BAMM!

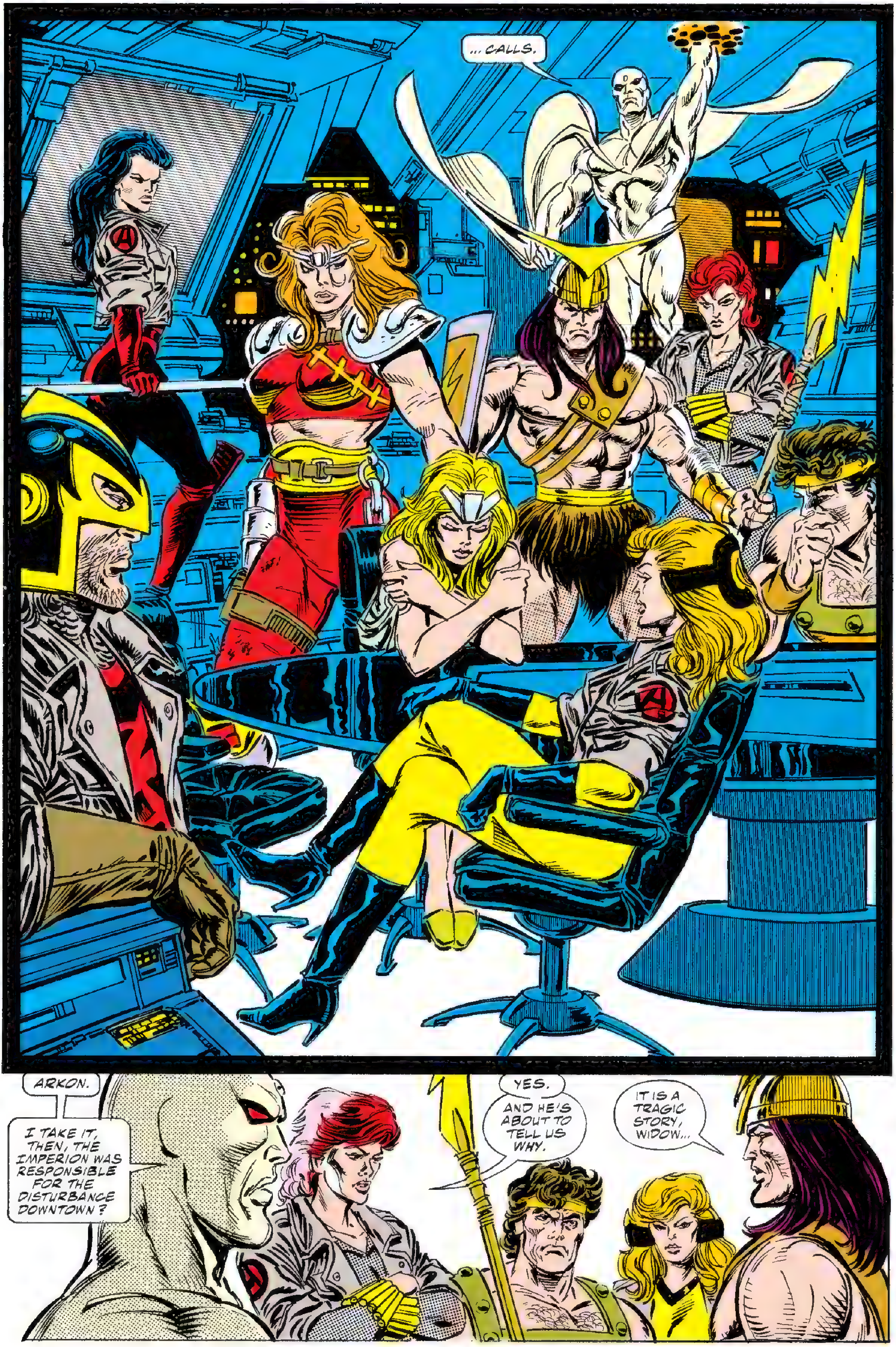

ARKON, O FOOLISH MAN--!
BE DONE WITH THIS BATTLE QUICKLY...
...BEFORE THE *OTHERS* FOLLOW.
AND WHO...
...PRAY TELL...
...ARE THESE 'OTHERS'?
SSSSS
SPEAK FAST, RED...
...OR I'LL *INCINERATE* YOU WHERE YOU STAND.
SSSSS
NICE GOING, SERSE--
--MAKING NASTY THREATS--
--WHILE *DINO* HERE WAS ABOUT TO EAT YOU FOR *LUNCH!*
DANE?!


CRYSTAL, HELP HERCULES WITH ARKON...
TEK
...WHILE DANE AND I SEE TO SUBDUING THIS CREATURE.
ON MY WAY, NATASHA...
THWOK
...ALTHOUGH IT LOOKS LIKE HERCULES CAN CLEARLY TAKE CARE OF THINGS HIMSELF.
STILL, A SEISMIC SHOCK WAVE SHOULD TIP THE SCALES IN OUR FAVOR!
RRUUMMBLLE
MY THANKS, FAIR CRYSTAL...
...THY ASSISTANCE IS EVER WELCOME.
NOW, IMPERION, THOU SHALT ANSWER FOR THY DEEDS!
ARKON!
ASTRA -- STAY HERE!
I WILL NOT!

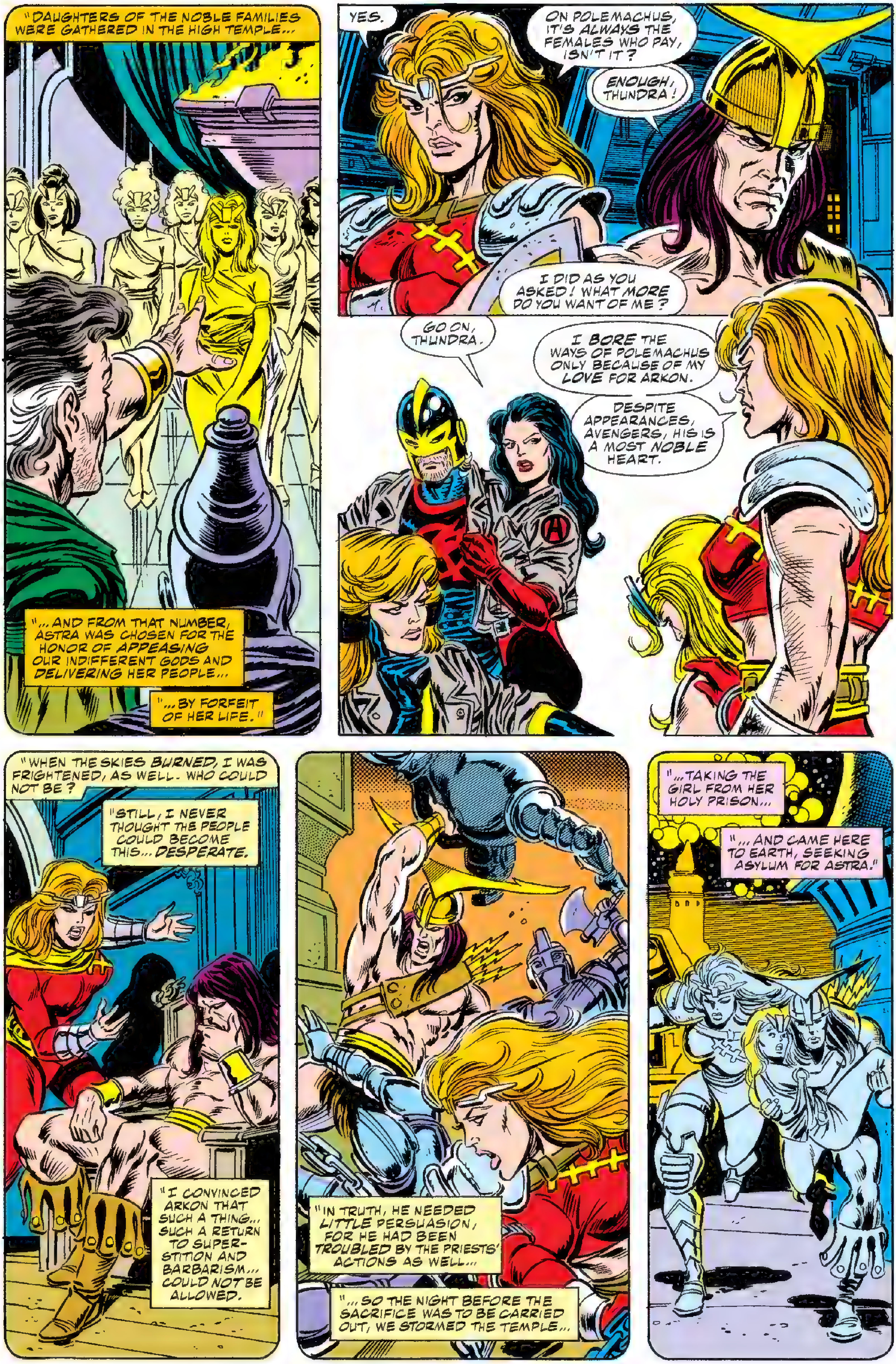

LET HIM GO, YOU BARBARIAN!
I SWEAR IF YOU *HARM* HIM, I'LL--
EH?!
CHILD...
...WE ONLY SEEK TO *PREVENT* FURTHER HARM TO ANY MORTAL.
AS DID I, AVENGER!
MY STEED WAS *DISORIENTED* BY THE TRANSIT. I SOUGHT ONLY TO *FRIGHTEN* THE HUMANS AWAY BEFORE THE SITUATION GOT OUT OF HAND...
...BUT THE CONSTABULARY *MISTOOK* MY ACTIONS. IN RETROSPECT, PERHAPS I WAS A BIT TOO FORCEFUL.
IN ANY REGARD, THIS CITY WAS MERELY A *STEPPING STONE* IN OUR *FLIGHT* FROM MY PEOPLE.
FLIGHT?
THAT DOESN'T *SOUND* LIKE YOU, ARKON.
WE'RE *FUGITIVES*, AVENGERS. THIS NIGHT, WE *STOLE* THE YOUNG FEMALE...
...*BREAKING* THE LAW OF POLEMACHUS.
WE TERRANS TAKE A *DIM* VIEW OF *KIDNAPING* AS WELL.
YOU DO *NOT* UNDERSTAND!
THIS CHILD IS TO BE *SACRIFICED!* HER HEART *TORN* FROM HER LIVING BODY!
WE COULDN'T *ALLOW* IT!
NO, WE COULD NOT.
BUT IN *SAVING ASTRA*, I HAVE *BETRAYED* MY PEOPLE...
...AND *DOOMED* MY WORLD.

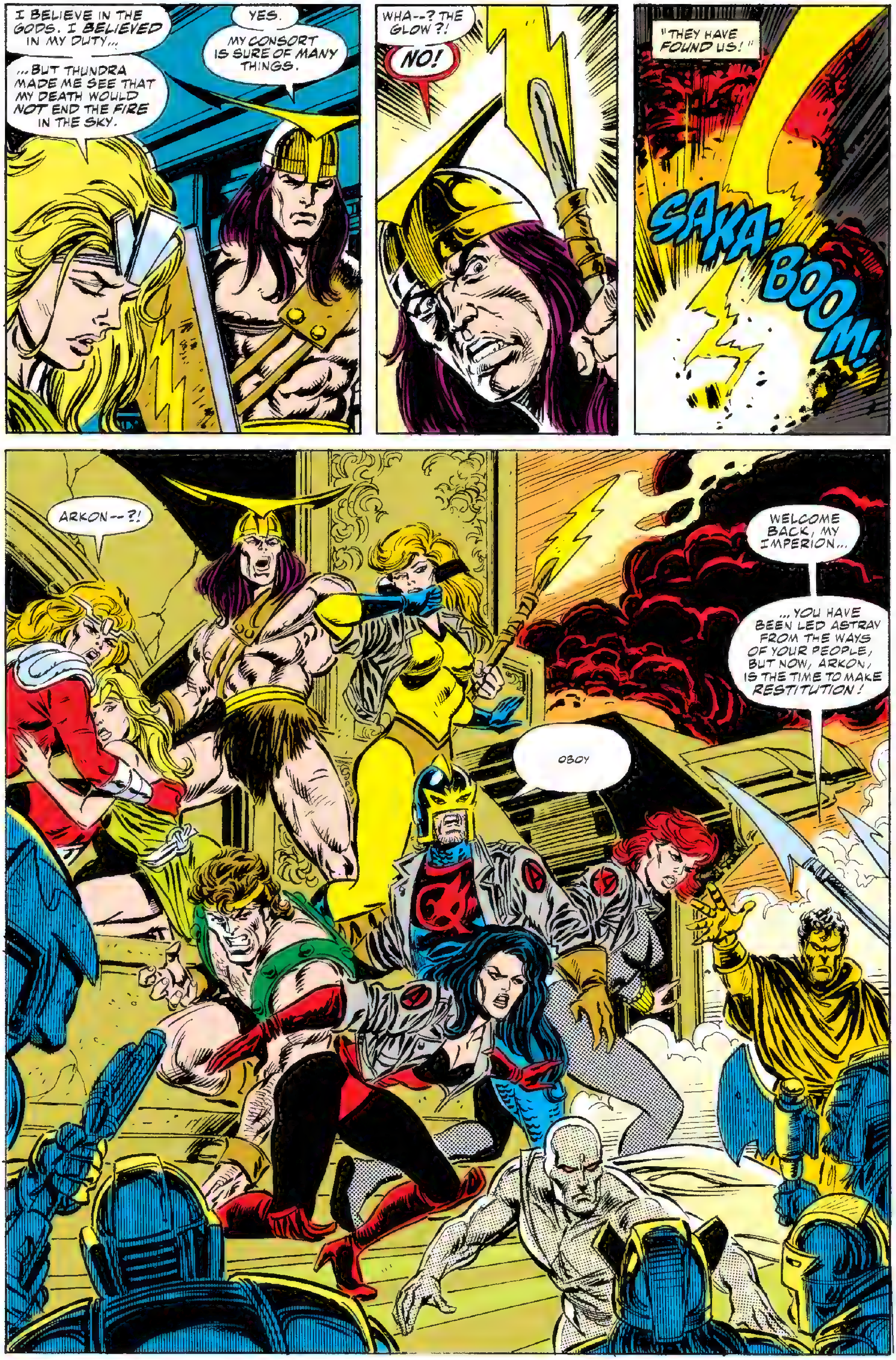

UPTOWN...
...AVENGERS MANSION.
COME IN.
OH. I WAS THINKIN' YE MIGHT BE DOWNSTAIRS.
I-I'VE BROUGHT YE DINNER...
...I'LL BE P-PUTTIN' IT RIGHT DOWN AN' BE OFF, YOUNG MISTER.
CALL ME PHILIP.
YOU'RE AFRAID OF ME, AREN'T YOU, MARILLA?
PROPERTY OF
YOU THINK I'M SOME SORT OF... I DON'T KNOW... GHOST.
I'M NOT, Y'KNOW.
TOUCH MY HAND, MARILLA.
IT'S WARM. IT'S REAL.
I'VE OVERHEARD ENOUGH, THANKEE VERY MUCH!
I KNOW HOW YE DIED, SAVING YE LADY LOVE. TRAGIC, IT WAS INDEED...
PROPERTY OF AVENGERS
...AND THEN YE LIFELESS CORPSE WAS TAKEN OVER BY A TALKIN' TREE AND YE MARRIED HER IN THE END. NOT MY TYPE OF HAPPY ENDING EXACTLY, BUT...
YE AVENGERS ARE VERY ODD, IF YE DON'T MIND ME SAYIN'.
WHAT?
HAHAHA!
THAT'S THE MOST ABSURD...
...OR HORRIFIC...
...STORY I'VE EVER HEARD!
VSSSS
NOW, DON'T BE RUDE! I'VE HEARD THESE THINGS, I HAVE!

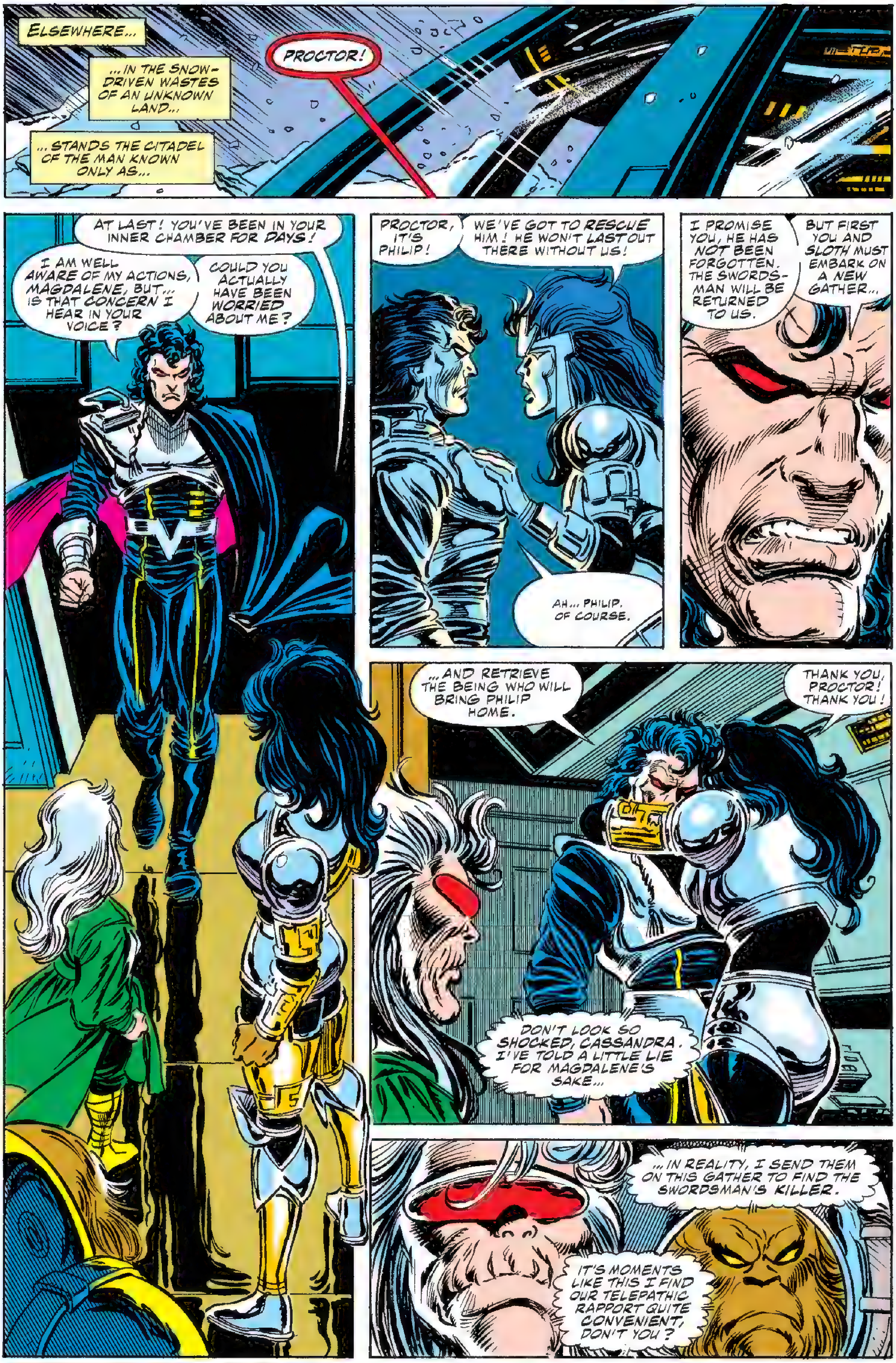

FORGIVE ME FOR EAVESDROPPING...
... BUT WHAT MARILLA HAS RELATED IS A SIMPLISTIC RETELLING OF THE EVENTS AS THEY OCCURRED.
VISION!
GET OUT OF MY ROOM!
PROPERTY OF AVENGERS
VSSSS
WHO YE BE CALLIN' 'SIMPLISTIC'?
SWORDSMAN...
...YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT I AM NOT THE AVENGER YOU KNEW IN YOUR TIMELINE.
THUS, ANY HOSTILE FEELINGS YOU HAVE TOWARD ME ARE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE TO YOUR ASSIMILATION HERE.
I AM NOT, NOR HAVE I EVER BEEN, YOUR ENEMY.
IF YOU LIKE, I CAN HELP YOU LEARN ABOUT YOUR COUNTERPART IN THIS WORLD.
I WOULD LIKE THAT...
...THANK YOU.
EXCELLENT.
WE WILL ACCESS THE ORIGINAL SWORDSMAN FILES. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHERE YOUR LIVES CORRESPOND AND WHERE THEY DIFFER--
BREEP!
VISION, BLACK WIDOW HERE. WE NEED YOU IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, PLEASE.
OF COURSE, NATASHA.
MY APOLOGIES, SWORDSMAN...
...WE WILL CONTINUE THIS AT ANOTHER TIME.
BUT DUTY...

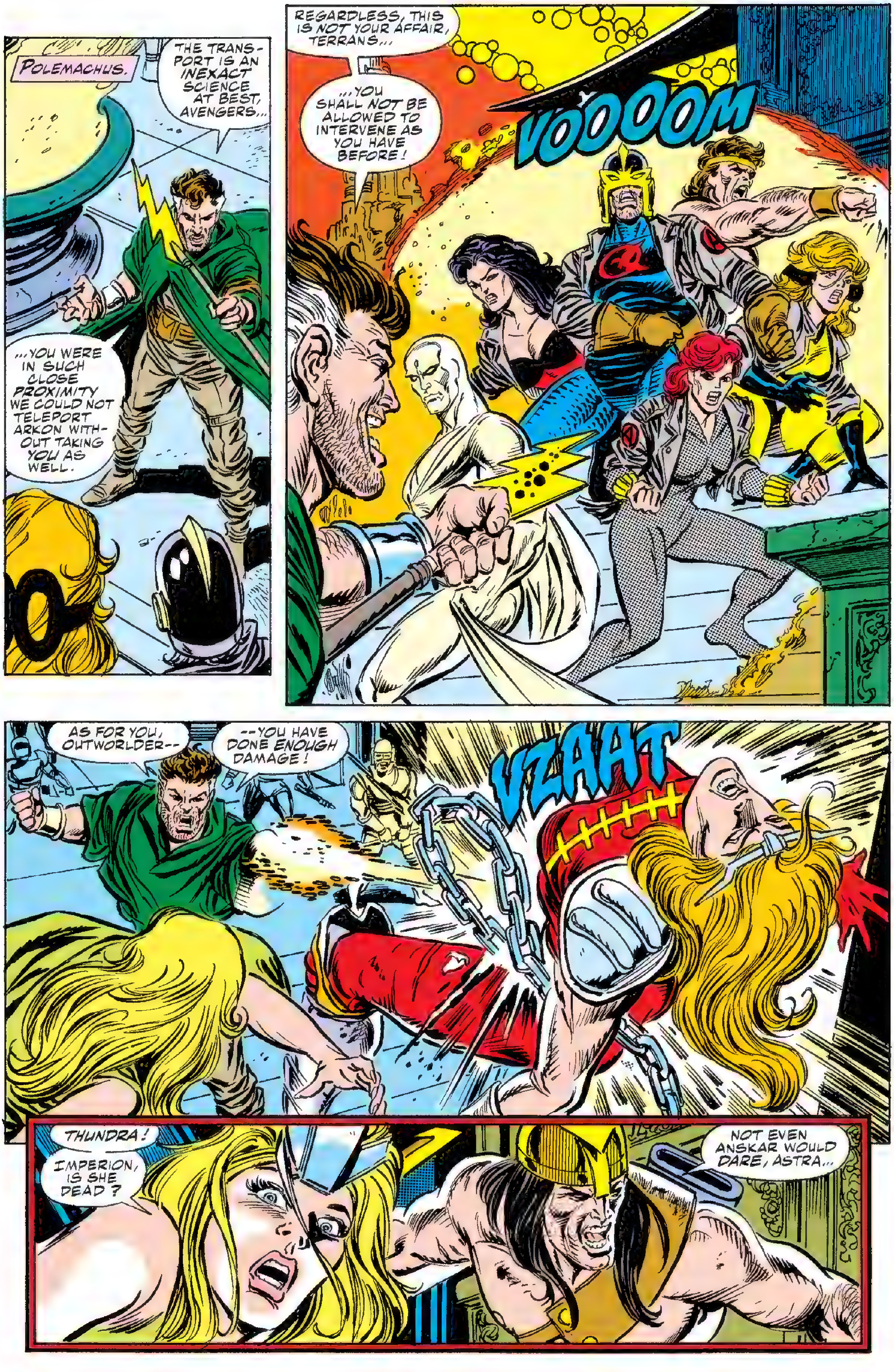

...CALLS.
ARKON.
I TAKE IT, THEN, THE IMPERION WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISTURBANCE DOWNTOWN?
YES.
AND HE'S ABOUT TO TELL US WHY.
IT IS A TRAGIC STORY, WIDOW...

...AS *MOST* OF YOU KNOW, MY WORLD, POLEMACHUS, ORBITS *NO STAR*. WE HAVE NO SUN SUCH AS YOURS.
"RATHER, OUR PLANET IS SURROUNDED BY A *BAND* OF ENERGY RINGS WHICH, BY THE GRACE OF THE GODS, GIVES US BOTH *LIGHT* AND *WARMTH*.
"IT IS THE SOURCE OF *ALL* LIFE ON MY WORLD.
"IN THESE LATTER YEARS, THE RINGS HAVE FAILED *TWICE*...
"...ONLY TO BE *RECTIFIED* FIRST BY YOU AVENGERS, THEN BY THE BEINGS CALLED X-MEN.
"WE THOUGHT THAT DANGER OVER, AND LIFE RETURNED TO NORMAL AS I RULED MY WORLD WITH MY CONSORT AT MY SIDE.
"BUT TWO CYCLES AGO, SOMETHING *UNPRECEDENTED* OCCURRED. THE RINGS *INCREASED* A THOUSANDFOLD IN INTENSITY...
"...THE SKIES *GLOWED* BRIGHT AS RIVERS DRIED AND CROPS WITHERED AND *DIED*.
"THE LAND WAS LAID *WASTE* BY HEAT SUCH AS WE HAD *NEVER* KNOWN.
"THE PEOPLE, FRIGHTENED BY THIS *NEW* DANGER, TURNED TO THE GODS FOR SUCCOR...
"...BUT *NONE* CAME.
"IT SEEMED THEY WERE *ANGRY* WITH US. WHY *ELSE* WOULD THE SKIES CONTINUE TO BURN?
"A CONTINGENT OF PRIESTS, LED BY A RIVAL OF MINE CALLED ANSKAR...
"...DECIDED OUR SINS--WHATEVER THEY WERE--WERE MANIFOLD AND HAD TO BE ATONED FOR BY A *RETURN* TO THE ANCIENT RITES...
"...HUMAN SACRIFICE.

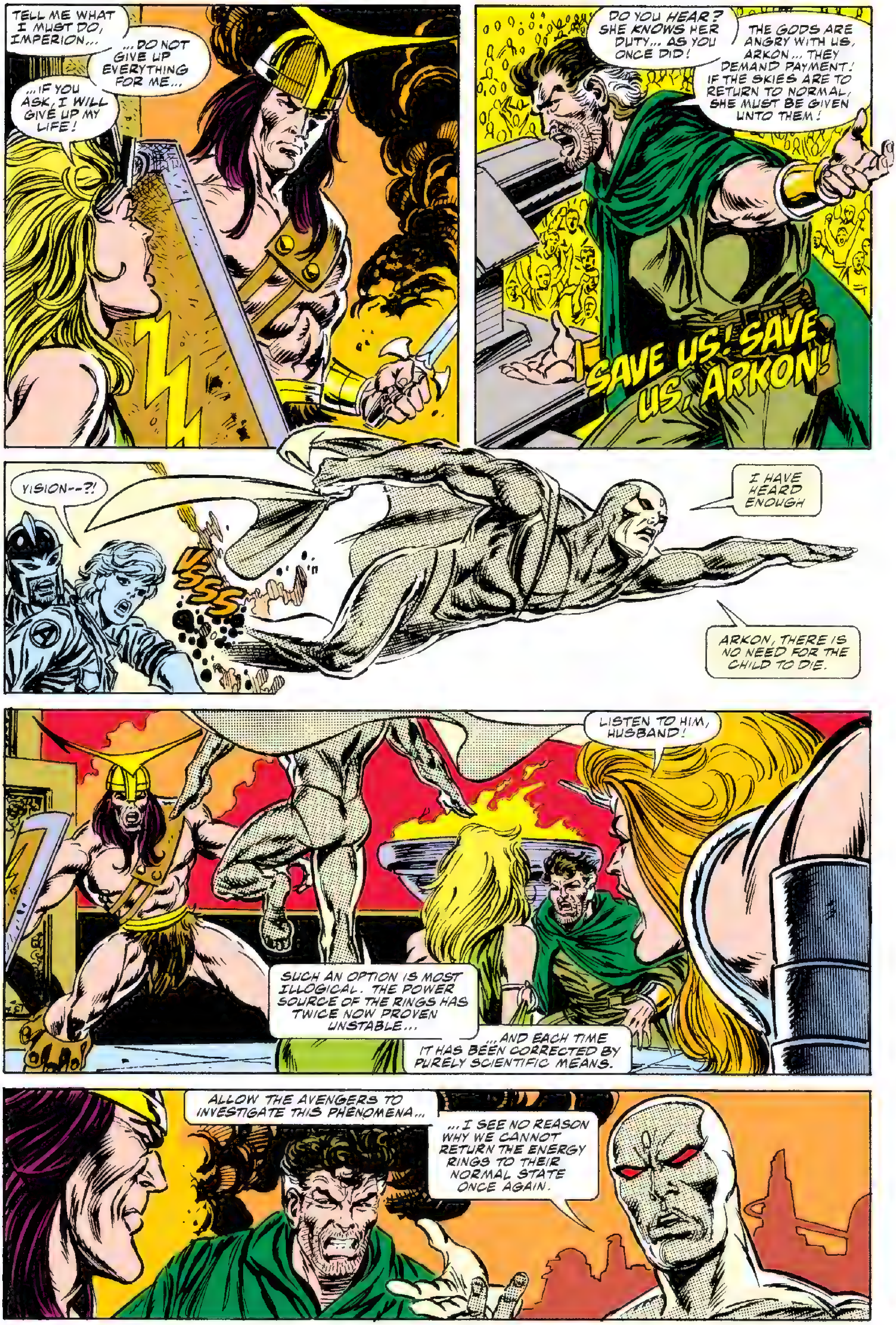

"DAUGHTERS OF THE NOBLE FAMILIES WERE GATHERED IN THE HIGH TEMPLE...
"...AND FROM THAT NUMBER, ASTRA WAS CHOSEN FOR THE HONOR OF APPEASING OUR INDIFFERENT GODS AND DELIVERING HER PEOPLE...
"...BY FORFEIT OF HER LIFE."
YES.
ON POLEMACHUS, IT'S ALWAYS THE FEMALES WHO PAY, ISN'T IT?
ENOUGH, THUNDRA!
I DID AS YOU ASKED! WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT OF ME?
GO ON, THUNDRA.
I BORE THE WAYS OF POLEMACHUS ONLY BECAUSE OF MY LOVE FOR ARKON.
DESPITE APPEARANCES, AVENGERS, HIS IS A MOST NOBLE HEART.
"WHEN THE SKIES BURNED, I WAS FRIGHTENED, AS WELL. WHO COULD NOT BE?
"STILL, I NEVER THOUGHT THE PEOPLE COULD BECOME THIS... DESPERATE.
"I CONVINCED ARKON THAT SUCH A THING... SUCH A RETURN TO SUPERSTITION AND BARBARISM... COULD NOT BE ALLOWED.
"IN TRUTH, HE NEEDED LITTLE PERSUASION, FOR HE HAD BEEN TROUBLED BY THE PRIESTS' ACTIONS AS WELL...
"...SO THE NIGHT BEFORE THE SACRIFICE WAS TO BE CARRIED OUT, WE STORMED THE TEMPLE...
"...TAKING THE GIRL FROM HER HOLY PRISON...
"...AND CAME HERE TO EARTH, SEEKING ASYLUM FOR ASTRA."

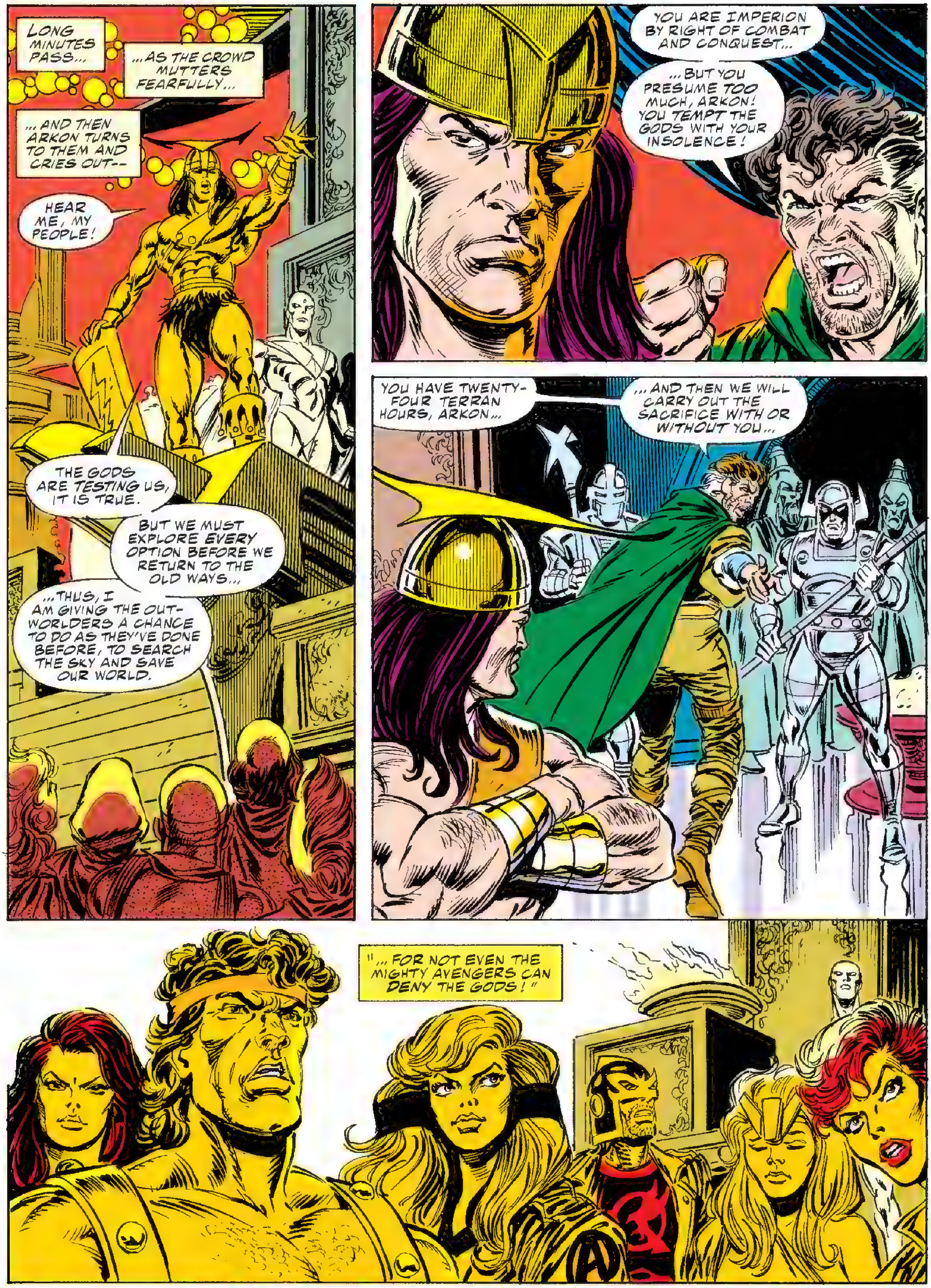

I BELIEVE IN THE GODS. I BELIEVED IN MY DUTY...
...BUT THUNDRA MADE ME SEE THAT MY DEATH WOULD NOT END THE FIRE IN THE SKY.
YES.
MY CONSORT IS SURE OF MANY THINGS.
WHA--? THE GLOW?!
NO!
"THEY HAVE FOUND US!"
SAKA-BOOM!
ARKON--?!
WELCOME BACK, MY IMPERION...
...YOU HAVE BEEN LED ASTRAY FROM THE WAYS OF YOUR PEOPLE, BUT NOW, ARKON, IS THE TIME TO MAKE RESTITUTION!
OBOY


ELSEWHERE...
...IN THE SNOW-DRIVEN WASTES OF AN UNKNOWN LAND...
...STANDS THE CITADEL OF THE MAN KNOWN ONLY AS...
PROCTOR!
AT LAST! YOU'VE BEEN IN YOUR INNER CHAMBER FOR DAYS!
I AM WELL AWARE OF MY ACTIONS, MAGDALENE, BUT... IS THAT CONCERN I HEAR IN YOUR VOICE?
COULD YOU ACTUALLY HAVE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT ME?
PROCTOR, IT'S PHILIP!
WE'VE GOT TO RESCUE HIM! HE WON'T LAST OUT THERE WITHOUT US!
AH... PHILIP. OF COURSE.
I PROMISE YOU, HE HAS NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN. THE SWORDSMAN WILL BE RETURNED TO US.
BUT FIRST YOU AND SLOTH MUST EMBARK ON A NEW GATHER...
...AND RETRIEVE THE BEING WHO WILL BRING PHILIP HOME.
THANK YOU, PROCTOR! THANK YOU!
DON'T LOOK SO SHOCKED, CASSANDRA. I'VE TOLD A LITTLE LIE FOR MAGDALENE'S SAKE...
...IN REALITY, I SEND THEM ON THIS GATHER TO FIND THE SWORDSMAN'S KILLER.
IT'S MOMENTS LIKE THIS I FIND OUR TELEPATHIC RAPPORT QUITE CONVENIENT, DON'T YOU?


POLEMACHUS.
THE TRANSPORT IS AN INEXACT SCIENCE AT BEST, AVENGERS...
...YOU WERE IN SUCH CLOSE PROXIMITY WE COULD NOT TELEPORT ARKON WITHOUT TAKING YOU AS WELL.
REGARDLESS, THIS IS NOT YOUR AFFAIR, TERRANS...
...YOU SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO INTERVENE AS YOU HAVE BEFORE!
VOOOOM
AS FOR YOU, OUTWORLDER--
--YOU HAVE DONE ENOUGH DAMAGE!
VZAAT
THUNDRA!
IMPERION, IS SHE DEAD?
NOT EVEN ANSKAR WOULD DARE, ASTRA...

...BUT IT IS A *LOW* DAY WHEN A NOBLE OF POLEMACHUS WOULD STRIKE DOWN A WOMAN!
I DO WHAT I MUST, ARKON.
UNLIKE YOU, I KNOW DUTY IS NOT ALWAYS PLEASANT.
YOU ARE MY LIEGE-LORD...
...BUT YOU HAVE *ERRED*.
LOOK AT THE SKY, ARKON. IT BURNS MORE FIERCELY EACH DAY...
...LOOK AT YOUR PEOPLE GATHERED IN THE GREAT PLAZA BELOW!
"THEY ARE A FRIGHTENED PEOPLE, ARKON... FOR THEMSELVES, FOR THEIR *CHILDREN*. THEY DO NOT WANT THIS WORLD TO DIE!
"YOU HAVE *BETRAYED* THEM AMIDST THEIR GREATEST CALAMITY! TAKEN FROM THEM THEIR ONE CHANCE OF DELIVERANCE."
YOU *MUST* RESTORE THEIR FAITH IN YOU, ARKON...
...YOU MUST *PLEASE* THE GODS. DO WHAT *MUST* BE DONE...
...FOR THERE IS *NO* OTHER WAY.
YOU WOULD HAVE *ME* DO THIS?
I AM A WARRIOR... NOT A MURDERER.

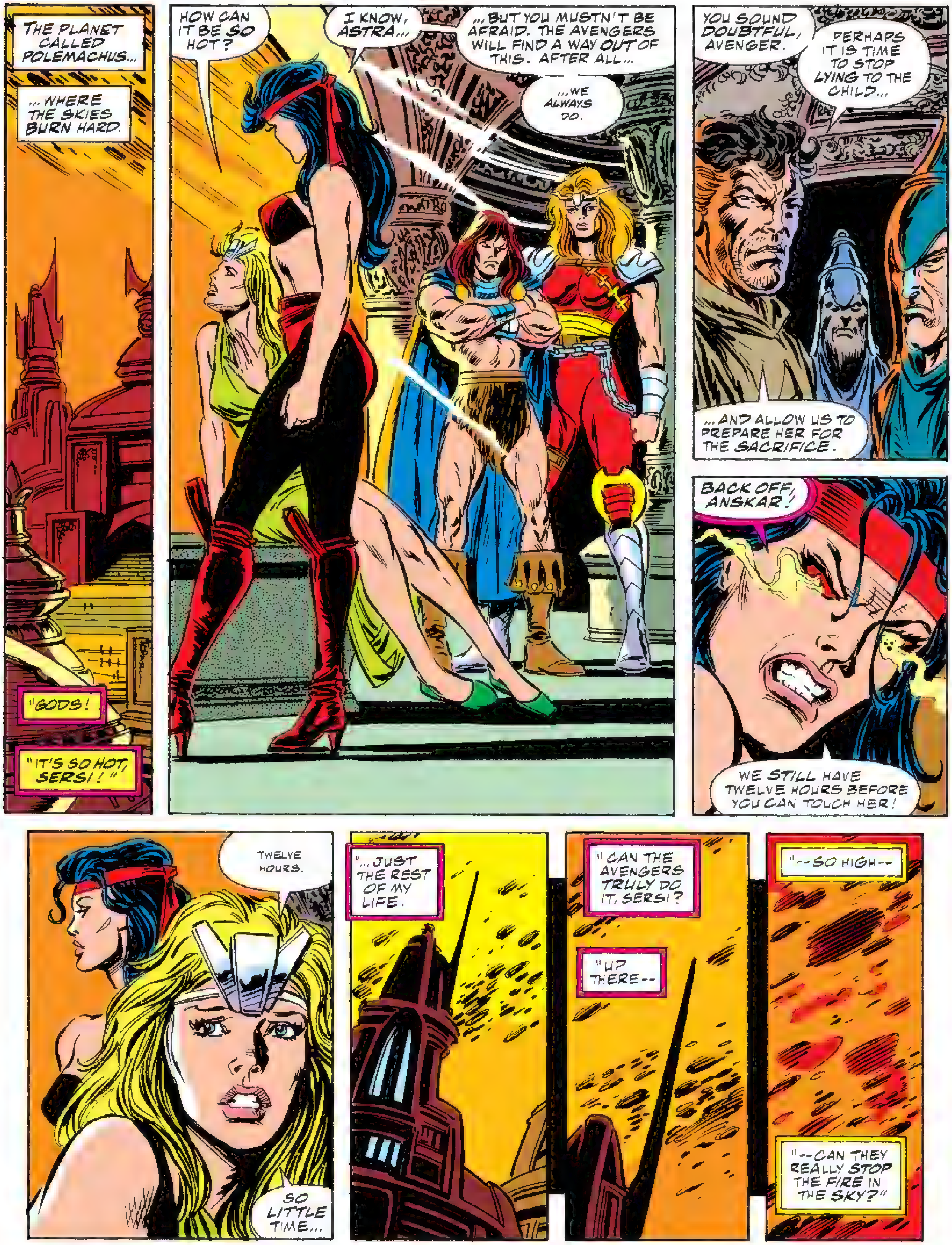

TELL ME WHAT I MUST DO, IMPERION...
...DO NOT GIVE UP EVERYTHING FOR ME...
...IF YOU ASK, I WILL GIVE UP MY LIFE!
DO YOU HEAR? SHE KNOWS HER DUTY... AS YOU ONCE DID!
THE GODS ARE ANGRY WITH US, ARKON... THEY DEMAND PAYMENT! IF THE SKIES ARE TO RETURN TO NORMAL, SHE MUST BE GIVEN UNTO THEM!
SAVE US! SAVE US, ARKON!
VISION--?!
VSSS
I HAVE HEARD ENOUGH
ARKON, THERE IS NO NEED FOR THE CHILD TO DIE.
LISTEN TO HIM, HUSBAND!
SUCH AN OPTION IS MOST ILLOGICAL. THE POWER SOURCE OF THE RINGS HAS TWICE NOW PROVEN UNSTABLE...
...AND EACH TIME IT HAS BEEN CORRECTED BY PURELY SCIENTIFIC MEANS.
ALLOW THE AVENGERS TO INVESTIGATE THIS PHENOMENA...
...I SEE NO REASON WHY WE CANNOT RETURN THE ENERGY RINGS TO THEIR NORMAL STATE ONCE AGAIN.

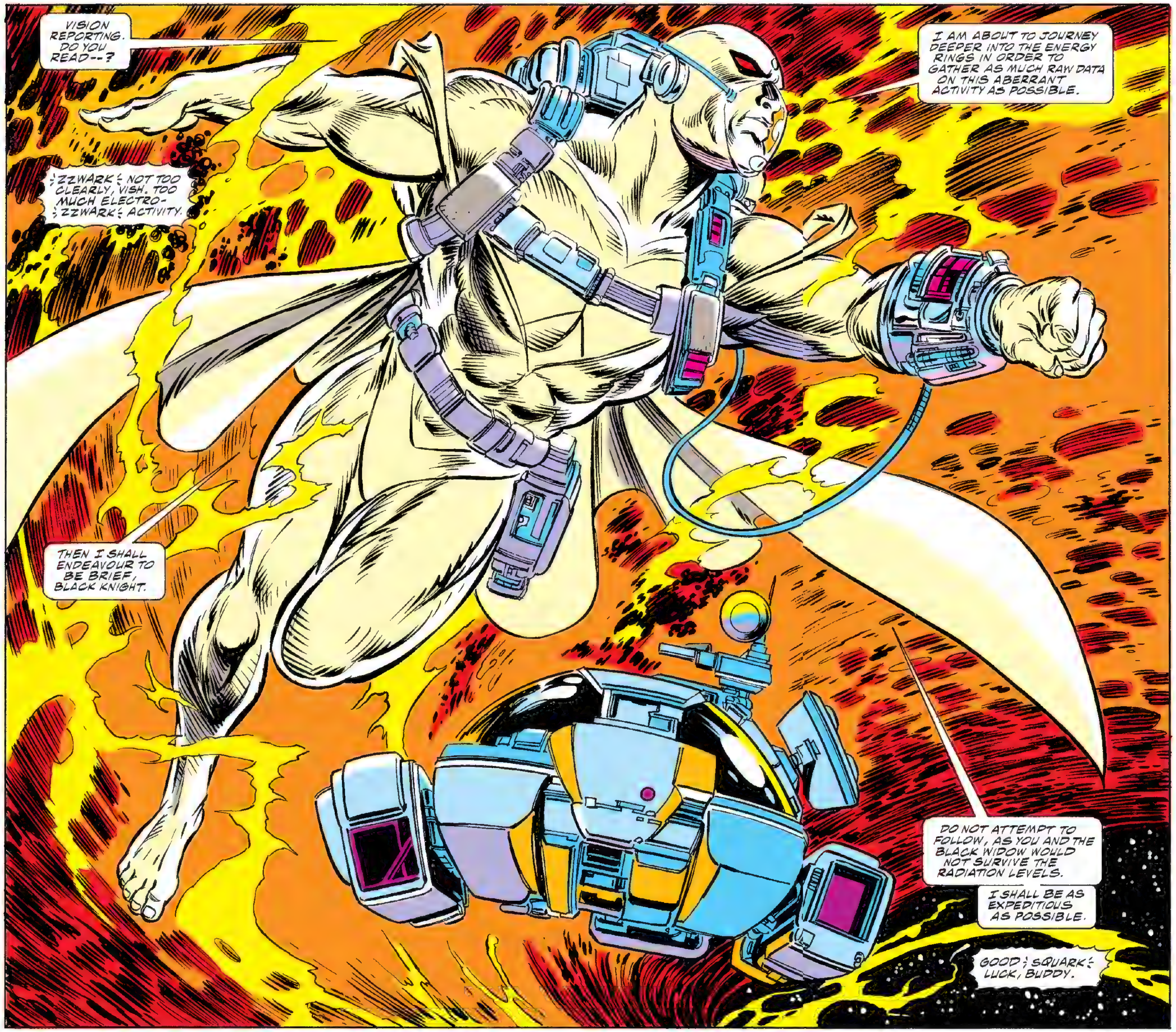

LONG MINUTES PASS...
...AS THE CROWD MUTTERS FEARFULLY...
...AND THEN ARKON TURNS TO THEM AND CRIES OUT--
HEAR ME, MY PEOPLE!
THE GODS ARE TESTING US, IT IS TRUE.
BUT WE MUST EXPLORE EVERY OPTION BEFORE WE RETURN TO THE OLD WAYS...
...THUS, I AM GIVING THE OUTWORLDERS A CHANCE TO DO AS THEY'VE DONE BEFORE, TO SEARCH THE SKY AND SAVE OUR WORLD.
YOU ARE IMPERION BY RIGHT OF COMBAT AND CONQUEST...
...BUT YOU PRESUME TOO MUCH, ARKON! YOU TEMPT THE GODS WITH YOUR INSOLENCE!
YOU HAVE TWENTY-FOUR TERRAN HOURS, ARKON...
...AND THEN WE WILL CARRY OUT THE SACRIFICE WITH OR WITHOUT YOU...
"...FOR NOT EVEN THE MIGHTY AVENGERS CAN DENY THE GODS!"

NEXT: GIFT TO THE GODS!

MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
™
© 1992 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
$1.25 US
$1.60 CAN
359
FEB
UK 85p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
TO SAVE A WORLD... ...ONE SHALL FALL!
EPTING · PALMER
30TH ANNIVERSARY 1962 1992
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

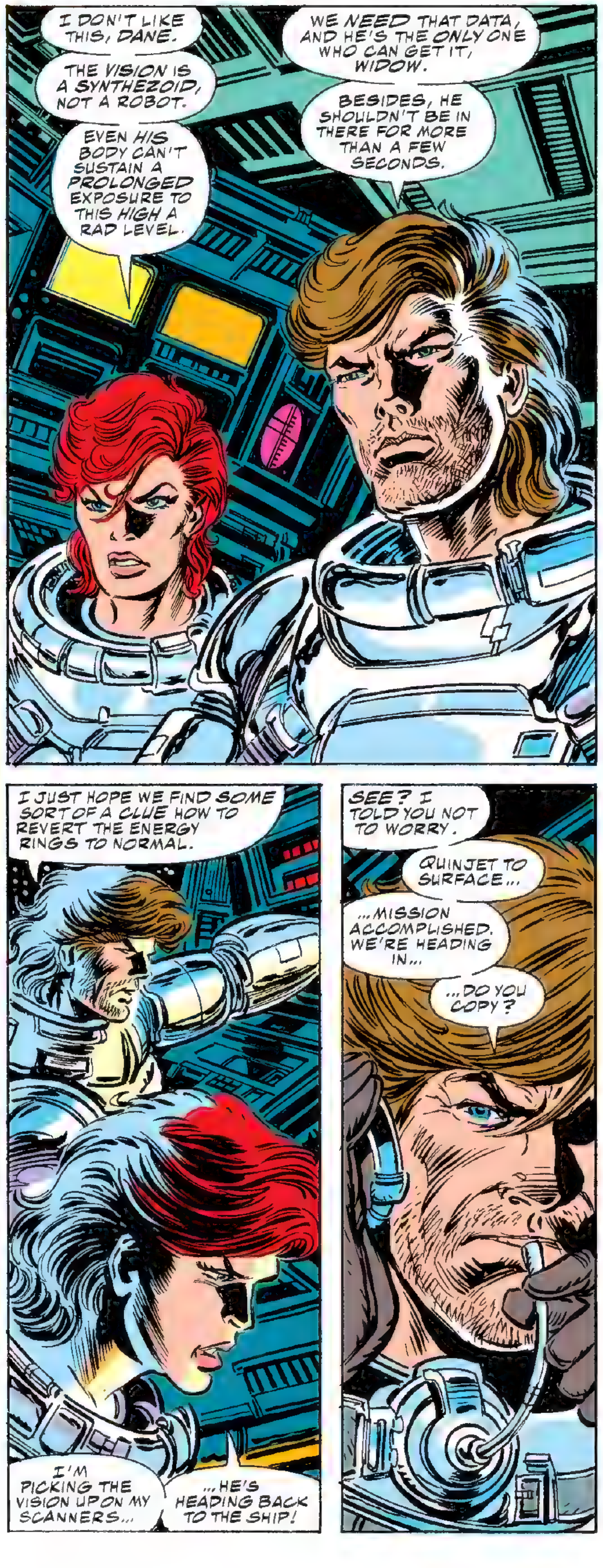
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

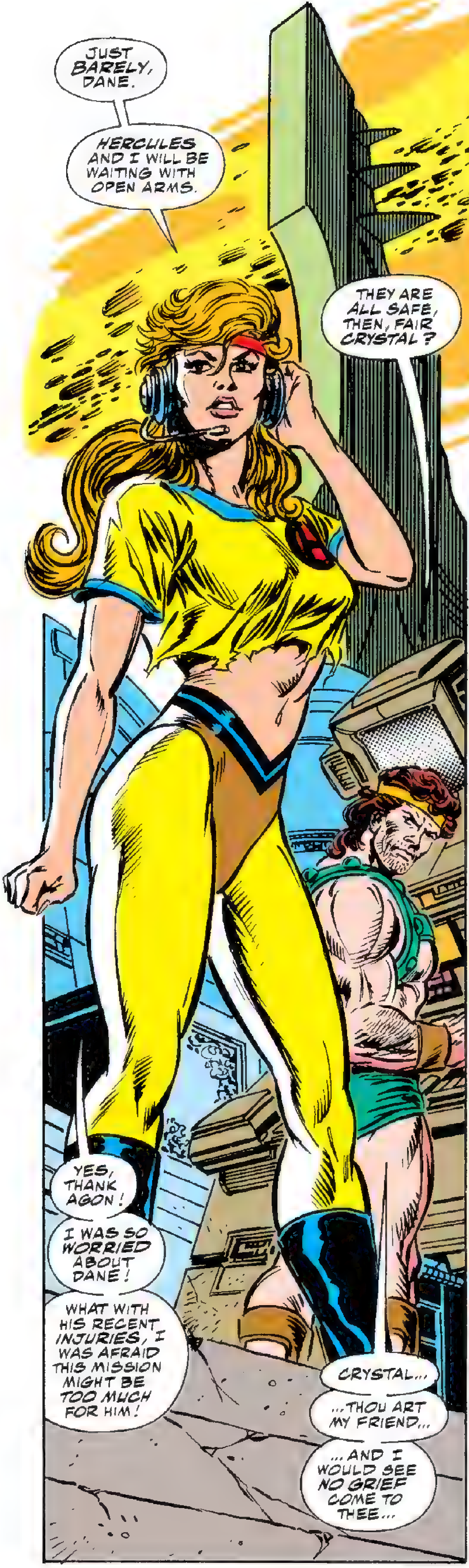

THE PLANET CALLED POLEMACHUS...
...WHERE THE SKIES BURN HARD.
"GODS!
"IT'S SO HOT, SERSI!"
HOW CAN IT BE SO HOT?
I KNOW, ASTRA...
...BUT YOU MUSTN'T BE AFRAID. THE AVENGERS WILL FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS. AFTER ALL...
...WE ALWAYS DO.
YOU SOUND DOUBTFUL, AVENGER.
PERHAPS IT IS TIME TO STOP LYING TO THE CHILD...
...AND ALLOW US TO PREPARE HER FOR THE SACRIFICE.
BACK OFF, ANSKAR!
WE STILL HAVE TWELVE HOURS BEFORE YOU CAN TOUCH HER!
TWELVE HOURS.
SO LITTLE TIME...
"...JUST THE REST OF MY LIFE.
"CAN THE AVENGERS TRULY DO IT, SERSI?
"UP THERE--
"--SO HIGH--
"--CAN THEY REALLY STOP THE FIRE IN THE SKY?"

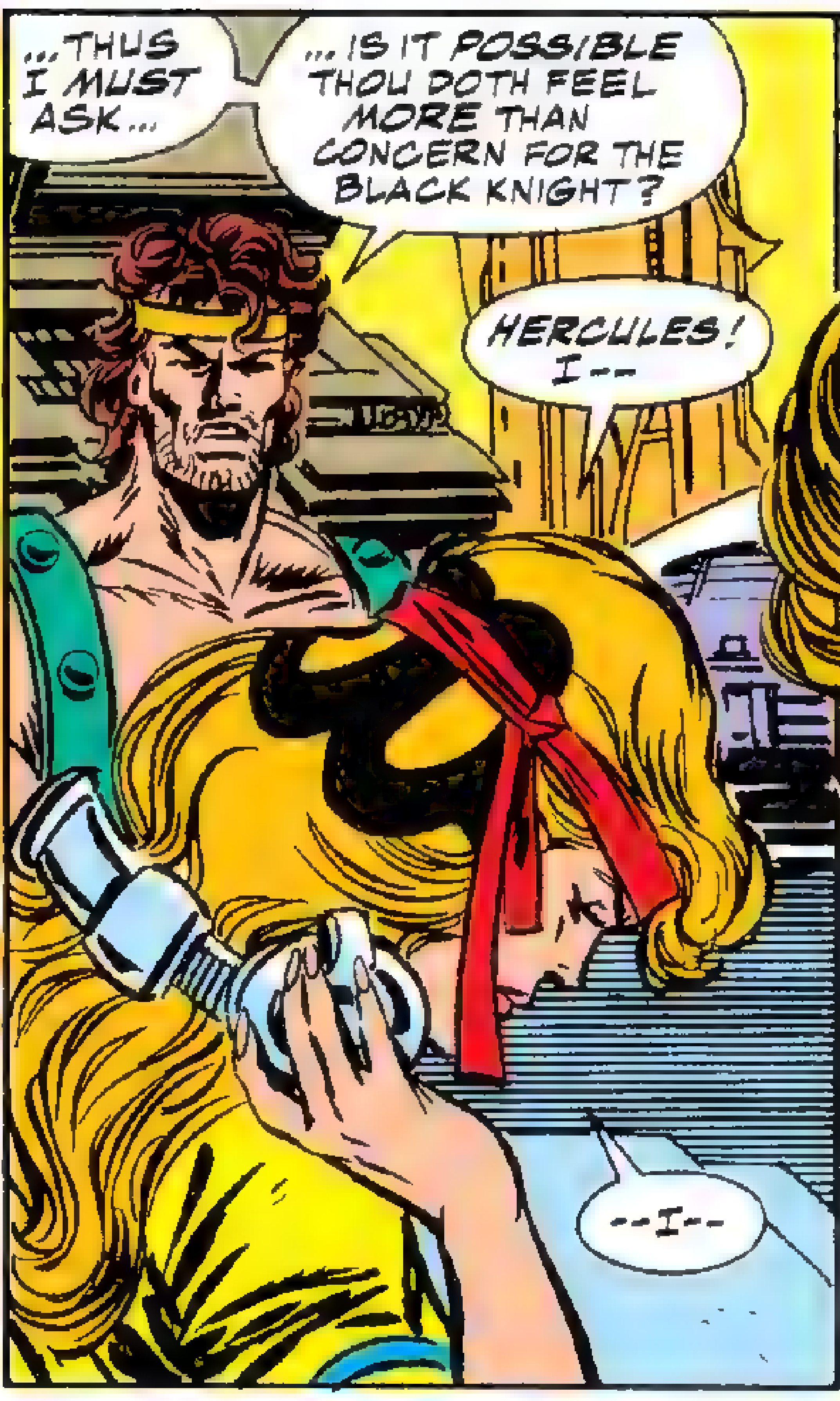

VISION REPORTING. DO YOU READ--?
I AM ABOUT TO JOURNEY DEEPER INTO THE ENERGY RINGS IN ORDER TO GATHER AS MUCH RAW DATA ON THIS ABERRANT ACTIVITY AS POSSIBLE.
-ZZWARK- NOT TOO CLEARLY, VISH. TOO MUCH ELECTRO- -ZZWARK- ACTIVITY.
THEN I SHALL ENDEAVOUR TO BE BRIEF, BLACK KNIGHT.
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW, AS YOU AND THE BLACK WIDOW WOULD NOT SURVIVE THE RADIATION LEVELS.
I SHALL BE AS EXPEDITIOUS AS POSSIBLE.
GOOD -SQUARK- LUCK, BUDDY.

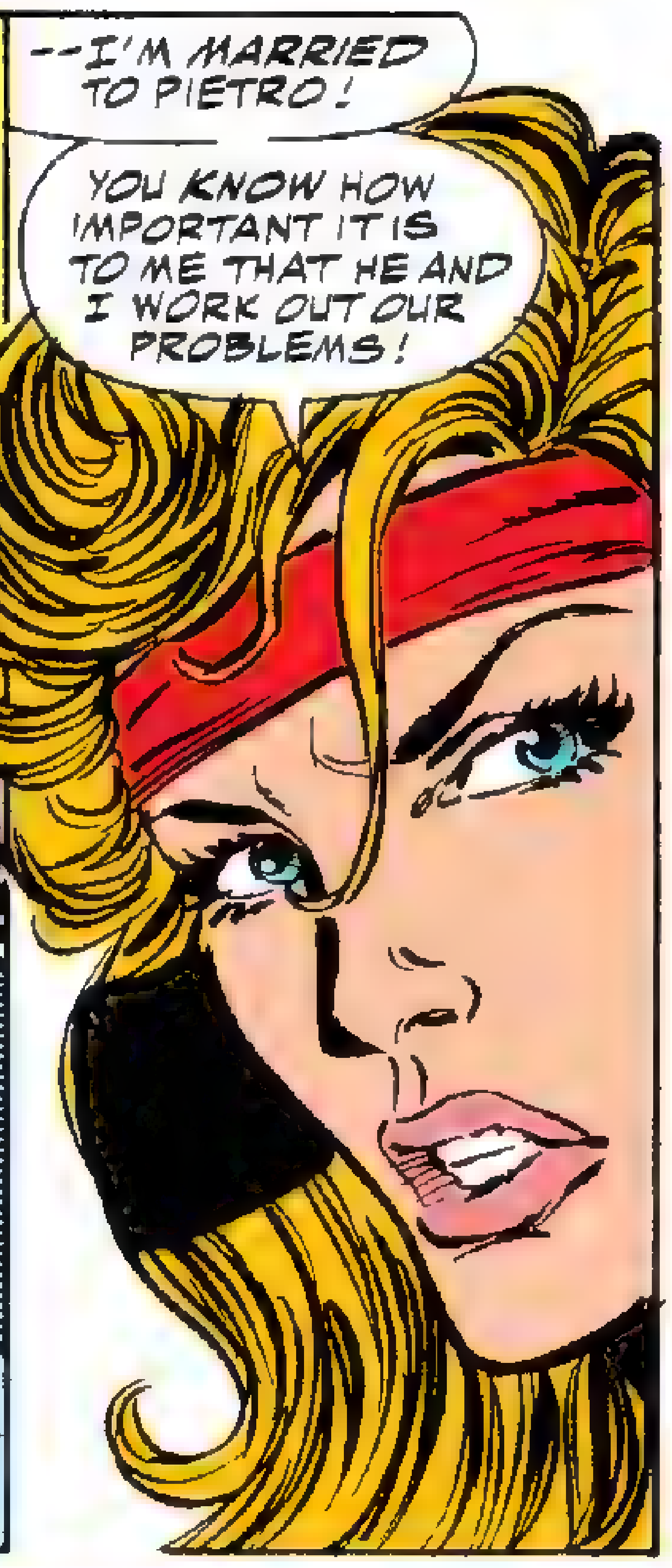
GIFT OF THE GODS

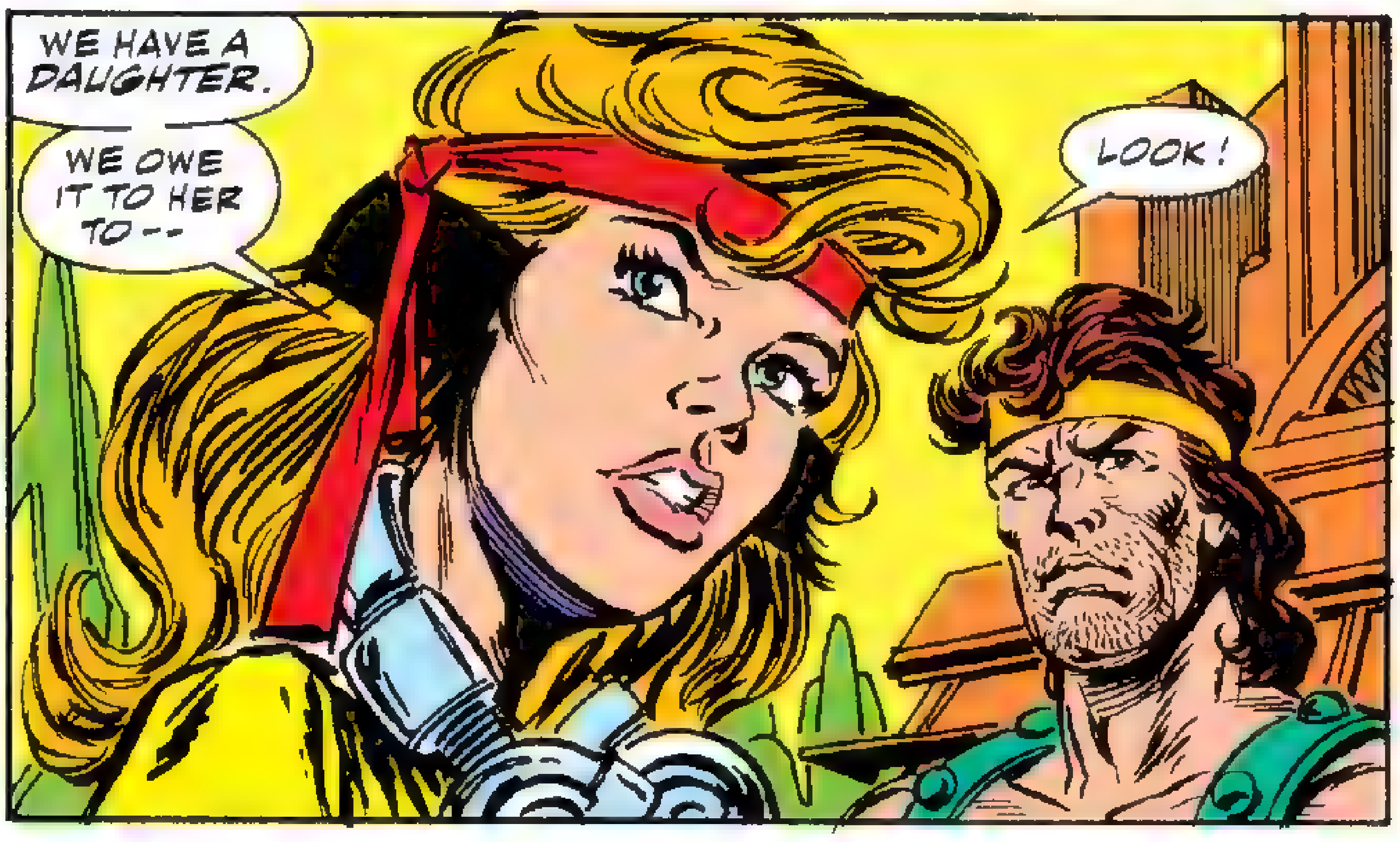
BOB HARRAS – WRITER
STEVE EPTING – PENCILER
TOM PALMER – INKER/COLORIST
BILL OAKLEY – LETTERER
RALPH MACCHIO – EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO – EDITOR IN CHIEF

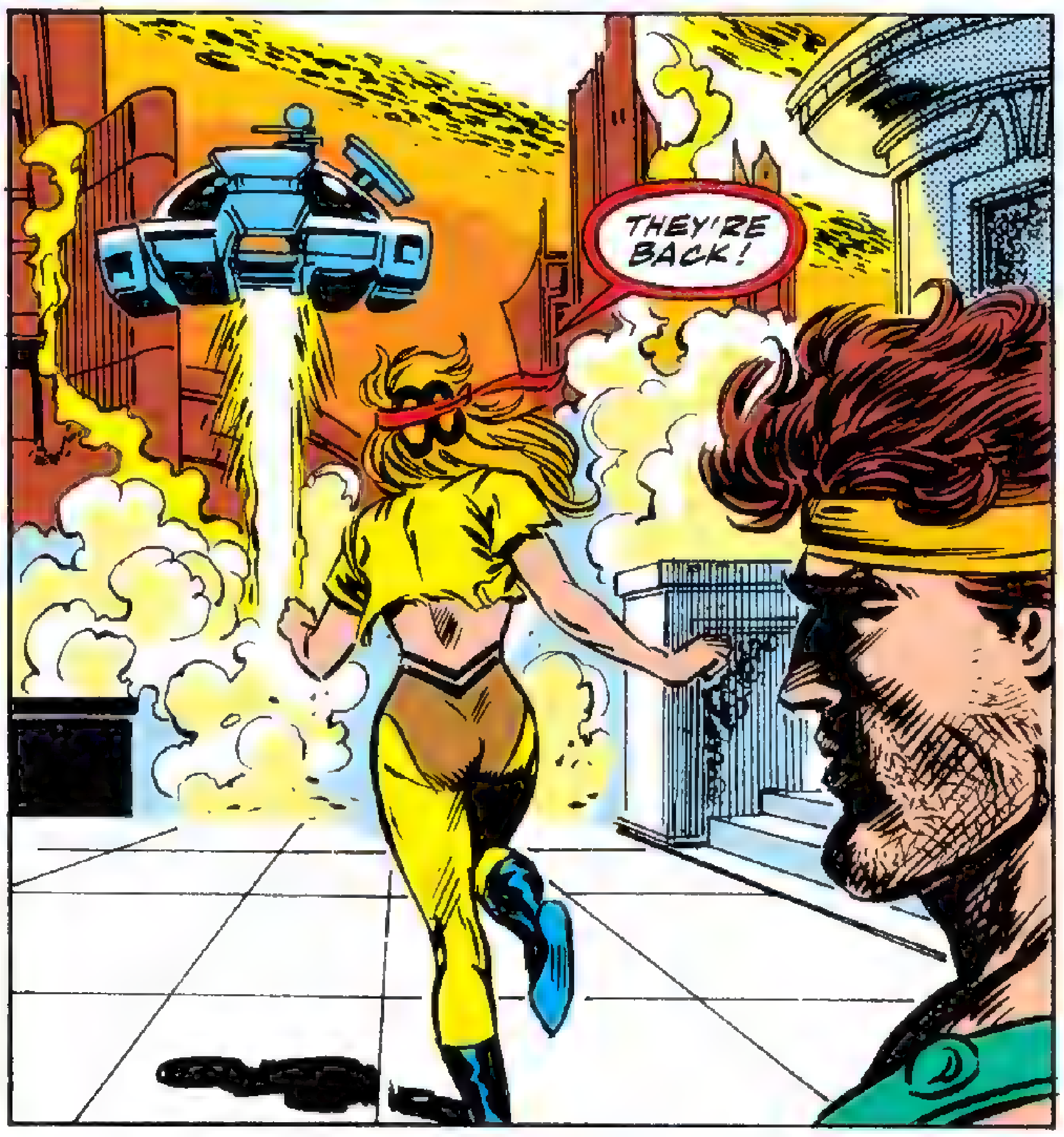

I DON'T LIKE THIS, DANE.
THE VISION IS A SYNTHEZOID, NOT A ROBOT.
EVEN HIS BODY CAN'T SUSTAIN A PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO THIS HIGH A RAD LEVEL.
WE NEED THAT DATA, AND HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GET IT, WIDOW.
BESIDES, HE SHOULDN'T BE IN THERE FOR MORE THAN A FEW SECONDS.
I JUST HOPE WE FIND SOME SORT OF A CLUE HOW TO REVERT THE ENERGY RINGS TO NORMAL.
I'M PICKING THE VISION UP ON MY SCANNERS...
...HE'S HEADING BACK TO THE SHIP!
SEE? I TOLD YOU NOT TO WORRY.
QUINJET TO SURFACE...
...MISSION ACCOMPLISHED. WE'RE HEADING IN...
...DO YOU COPY?

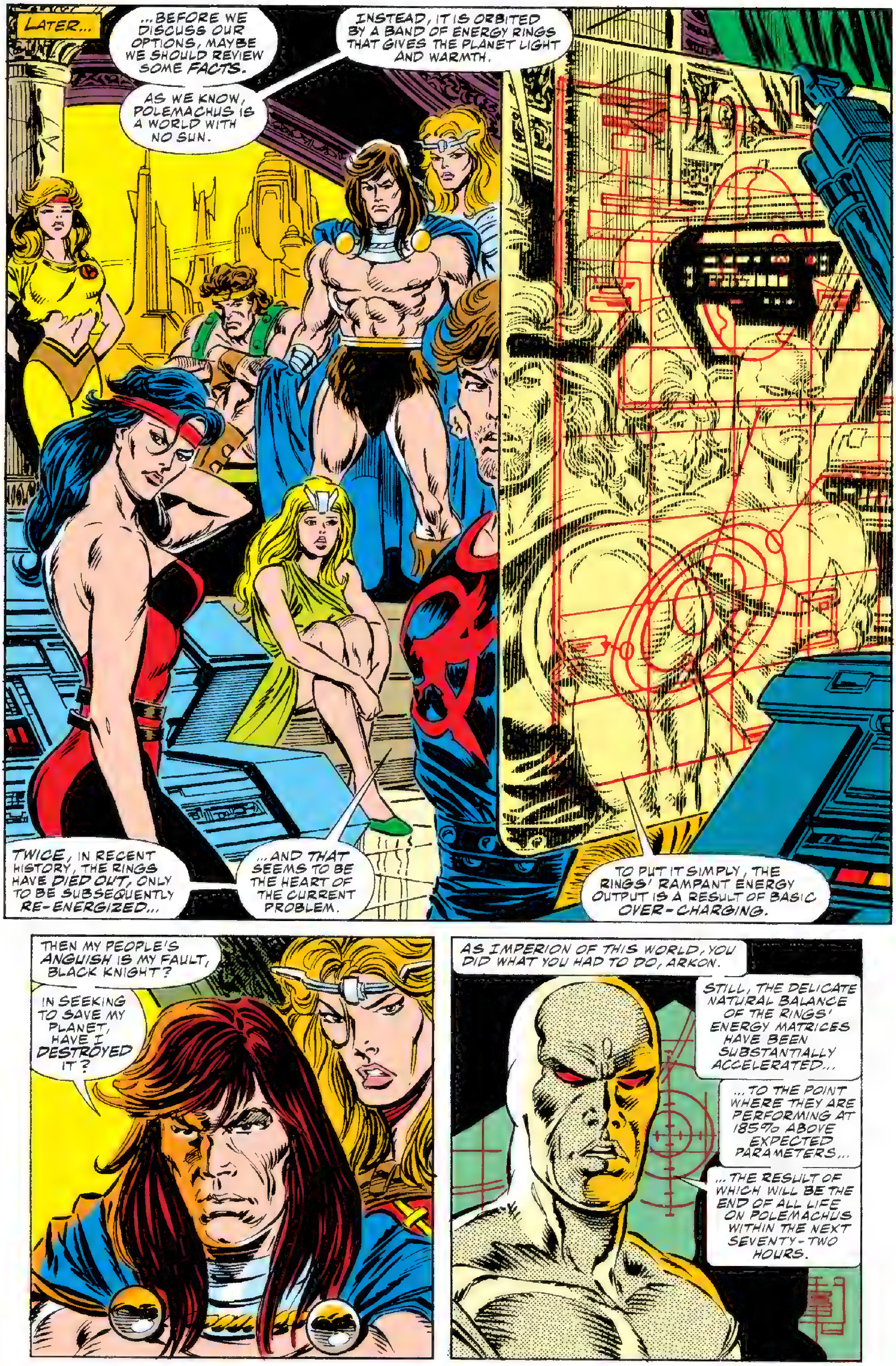

JUST BARELY, DANE.
HERCULES AND I WILL BE WAITING WITH OPEN ARMS.
THEY ARE ALL SAFE, THEN, FAIR CRYSTAL?
YES, THANK AGON!
I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT DANE!
WHAT WITH HIS RECENT INJURIES, I WAS AFRAID THIS MISSION MIGHT BE TOO MUCH FOR HIM!
CRYSTAL...
...THOU ART MY FRIEND...
...AND I WOULD SEE NO GRIEF COME TO THEE...

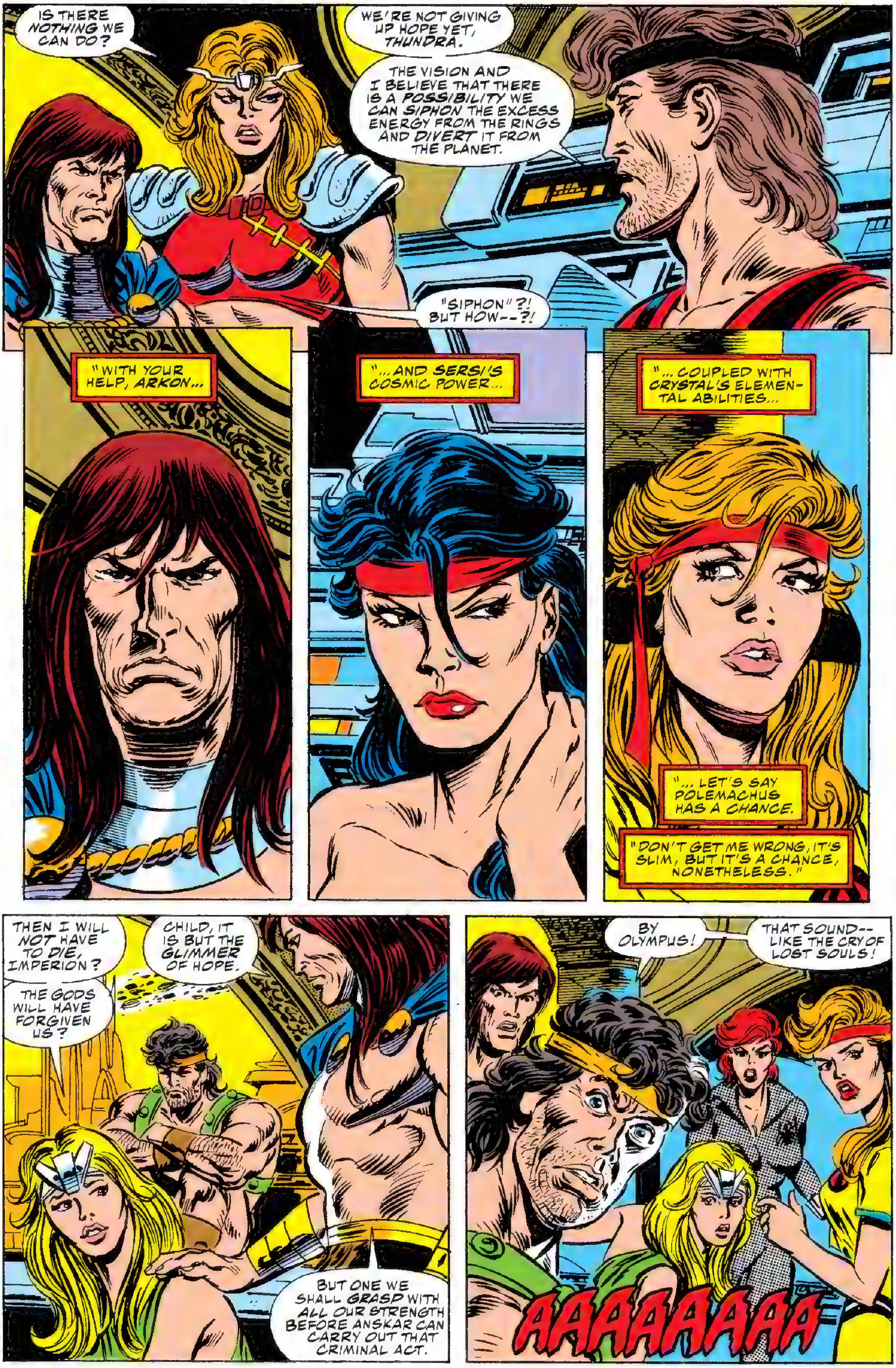

...THUS I MUST ASK...
...IS IT POSSIBLE THOU DOTH FEEL MORE THAN CONCERN FOR THE BLACK KNIGHT?
HERCULES! I--
--I--

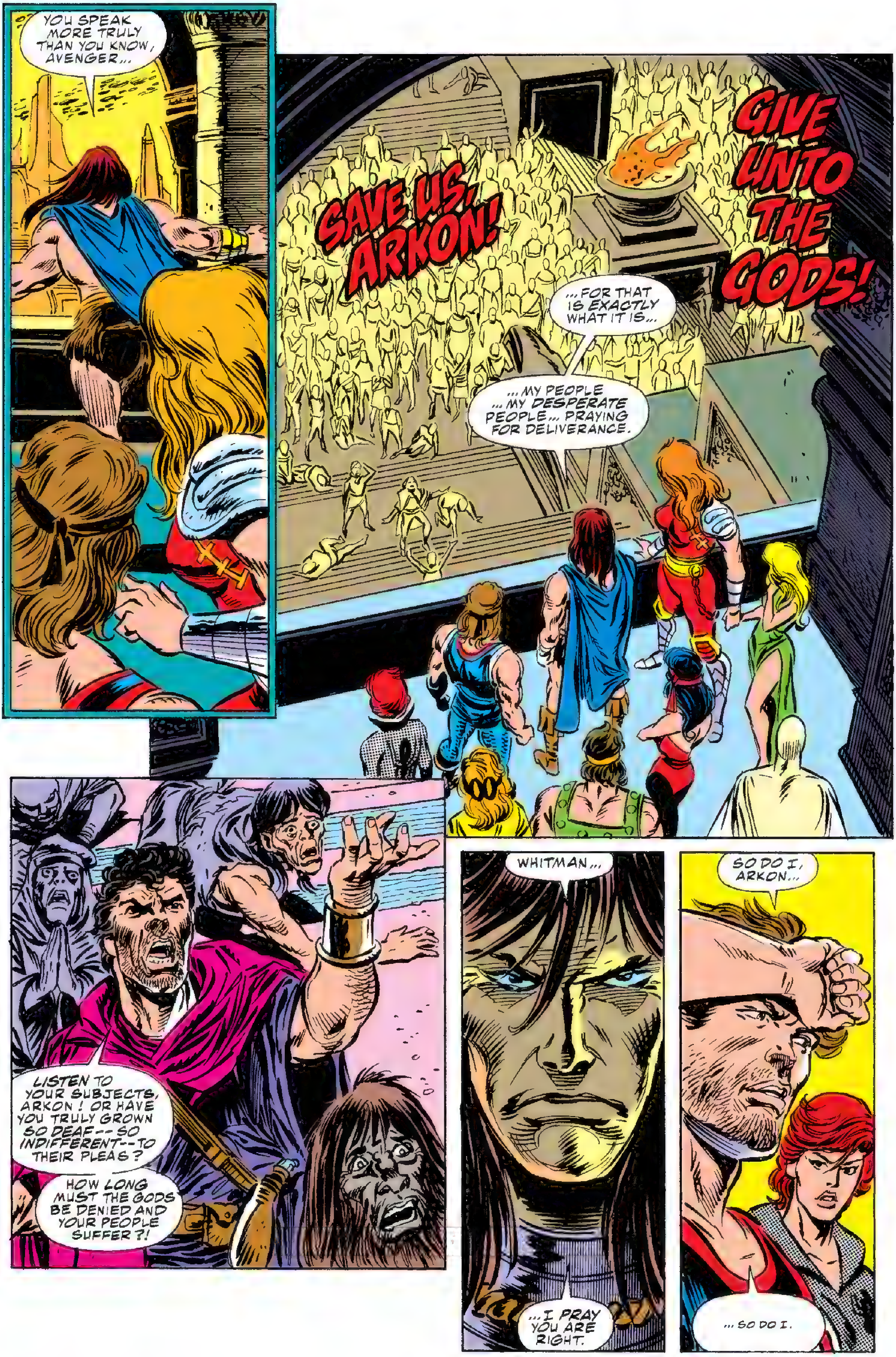

--I'M MARRIED TO PIETRO!
YOU KNOW HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO ME THAT HE AND I WORK OUT OUR PROBLEMS!

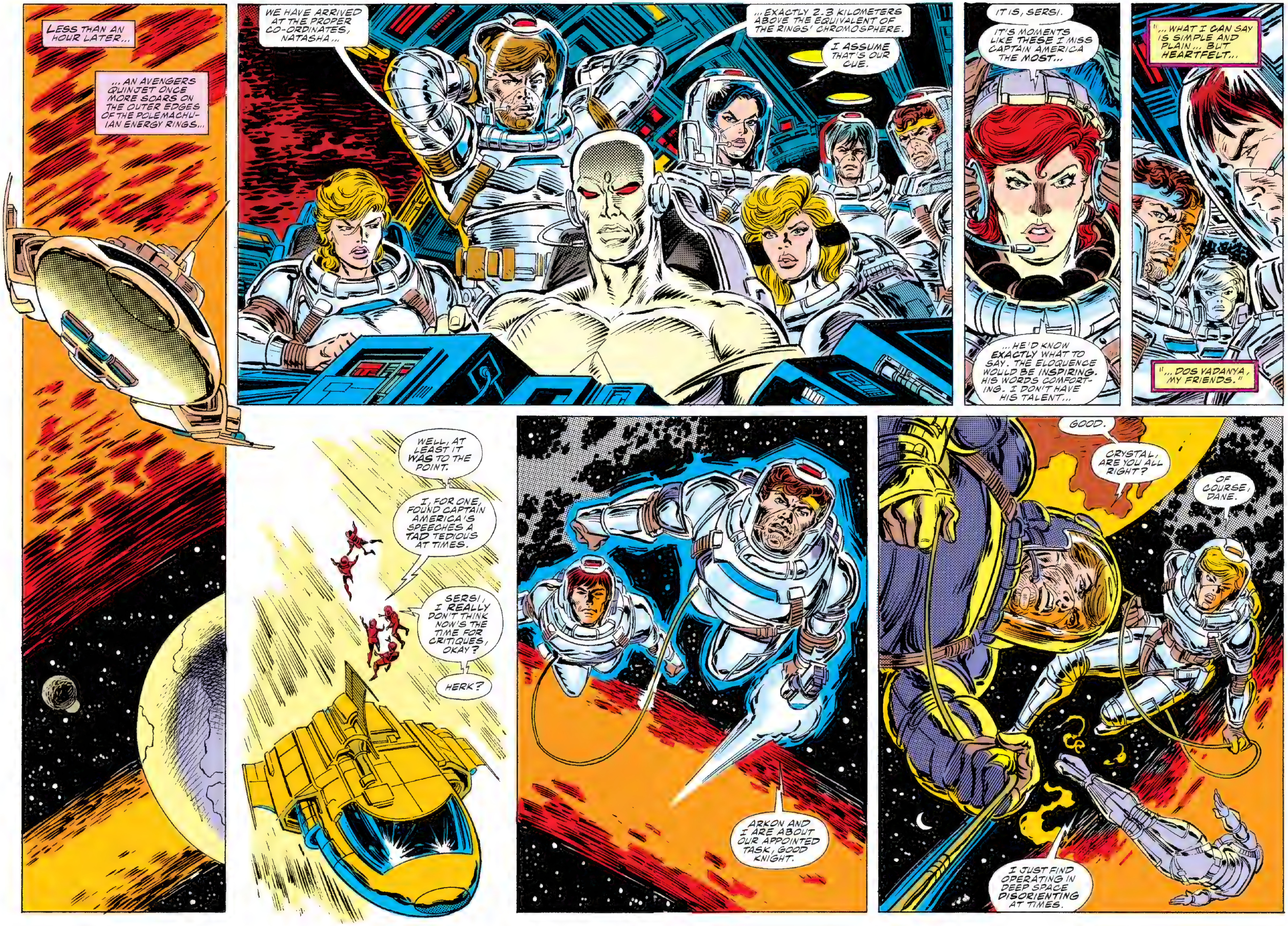

WE HAVE A DAUGHTER.
WE OWE IT TO HER TO--
LOOK!


THEY'RE BACK!

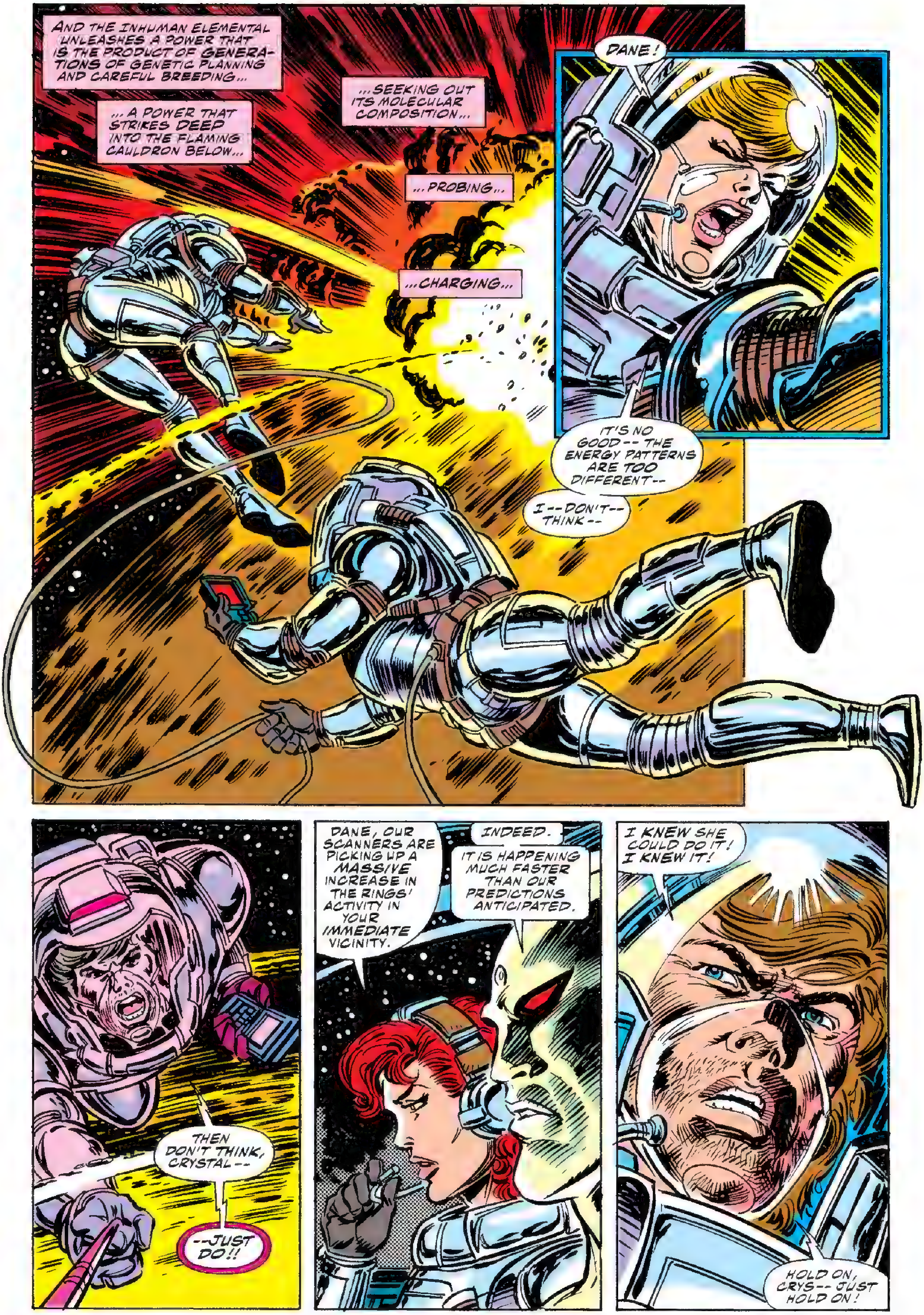

LATER...
...BEFORE WE DISCUSS OUR OPTIONS, MAYBE WE SHOULD REVIEW SOME FACTS.
AS WE KNOW, POLEMACHUS IS A WORLD WITH NO SUN.
INSTEAD, IT IS ORBITED BY A BAND OF ENERGY RINGS THAT GIVES THE PLANET LIGHT AND WARMTH.
TWICE, IN RECENT HISTORY, THE RINGS HAVE DIED OUT, ONLY TO BE SUBSEQUENTLY RE-ENERGIZED...
...AND THAT SEEMS TO BE THE HEART OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM.
TO PUT IT SIMPLY, THE RINGS' RAMPANT ENERGY OUTPUT IS A RESULT OF BASIC OVER-CHARGING.
THEN MY PEOPLE'S ANGUISH IS MY FAULT, BLACK KNIGHT?
IN SEEKING TO SAVE MY PLANET, HAVE I DESTROYED IT?
AS IMPERION OF THIS WORLD, YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO, ARKON.
STILL, THE DELICATE NATURAL BALANCE OF THE RINGS' ENERGY MATRICES HAVE BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY ACCELERATED...
...TO THE POINT WHERE THEY ARE PERFORMING AT 185% ABOVE EXPECTED PARAMETERS...
...THE RESULT OF WHICH WILL BE THE END OF ALL LIFE ON POLEMACHUS WITHIN THE NEXT SEVENTY-TWO HOURS.

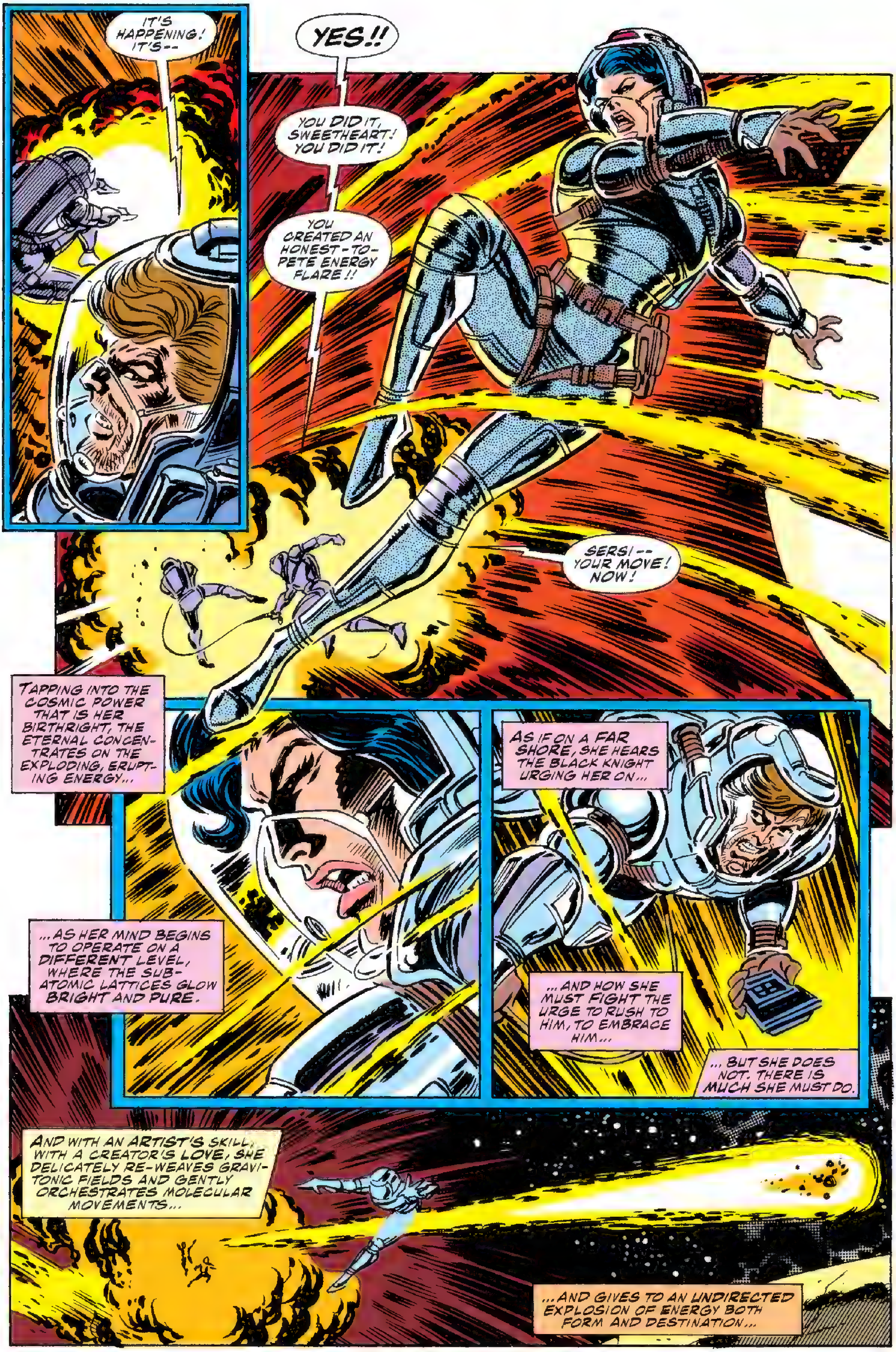

IS THERE *NOTHING* WE CAN DO?
WE'RE NOT GIVING UP HOPE YET, *THUNDRA*.
THE VISION AND I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A *POSSIBILITY* WE CAN *SIPHON* THE EXCESS ENERGY FROM THE RINGS AND *DIVERT* IT FROM THE PLANET.
"SIPHON"?! BUT HOW--?!
"WITH YOUR HELP, *ARKON*...
"...AND *SERSI'S* COSMIC POWER...
"...COUPLED WITH *CRYSTAL'S* ELEMENTAL ABILITIES...
"...LET'S SAY POLEMACHUS HAS A CHANCE.
"DON'T GET ME WRONG, IT'S SLIM, BUT IT'S A CHANCE, NONETHELESS."
THEN I WILL *NOT* HAVE TO *DIE*, IMPERION?
THE GODS WILL HAVE FORGIVEN US?
CHILD, IT IS BUT THE *GLIMMER* OF HOPE.
BUT ONE WE SHALL *GRASP* WITH *ALL OUR STRENGTH* BEFORE ANSKAR CAN CARRY OUT THAT CRIMINAL ACT.
BY OLYMPUS!
THAT SOUND-- LIKE THE CRY OF LOST SOULS!
AAAAAAAA

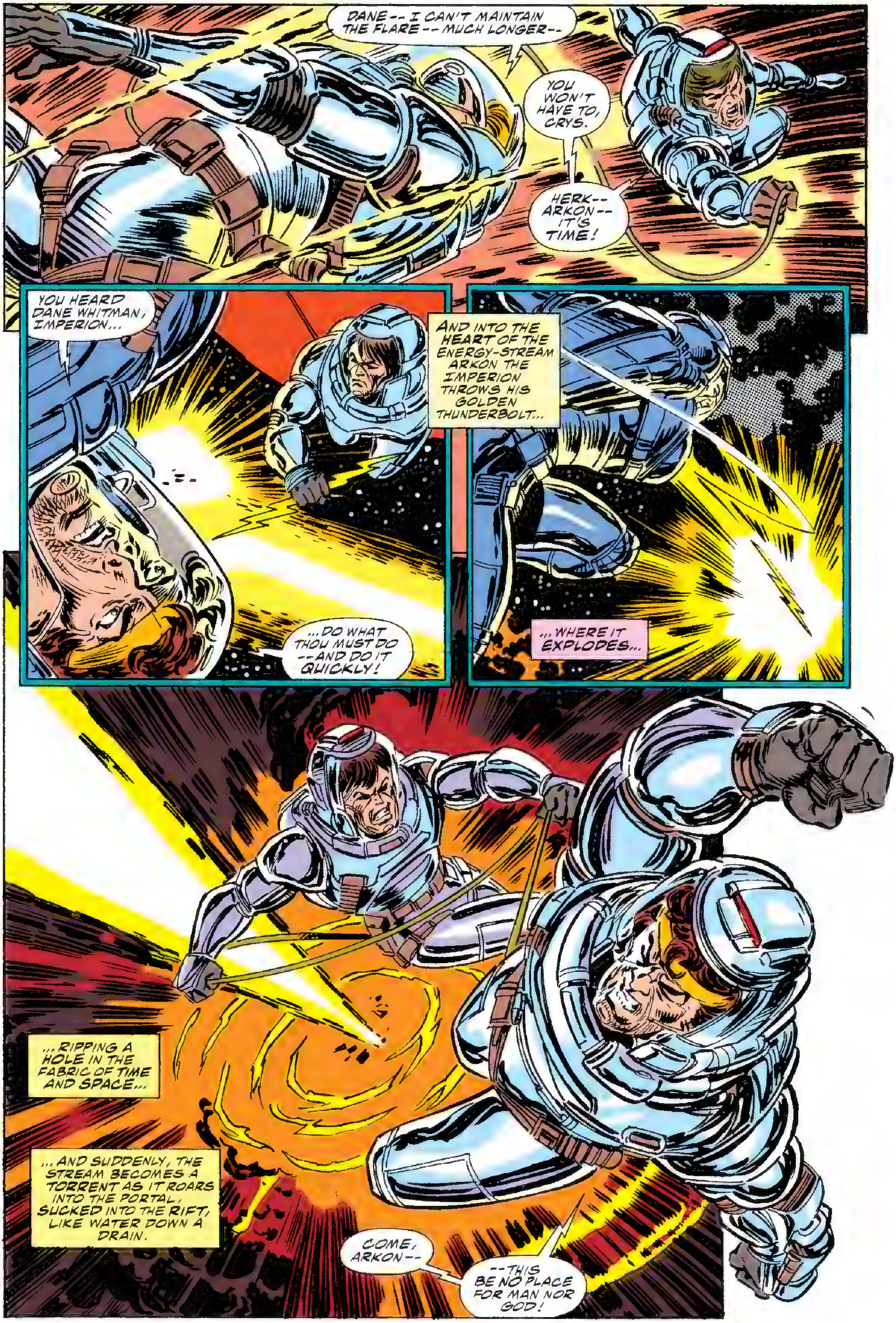

YOU SPEAK MORE TRULY THAN YOU KNOW, AVENGER...
SAVE US, ARKON!
GIVE UNTO THE GODS!
...FOR THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT IT IS...
...MY PEOPLE ...MY DESPERATE PEOPLE... PRAYING FOR DELIVERANCE.
LISTEN TO YOUR SUBJECTS, ARKON! OR HAVE YOU TRULY GROWN SO DEAF--SO INDIFFERENT--TO THEIR PLEAS?
HOW LONG MUST THE GODS BE DENIED AND YOUR PEOPLE SUFFER?!
WHITMAN...
...I PRAY YOU ARE RIGHT.
SO DO I, ARKON...
...SO DO I.


LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER...
...AN AVENGERS QUINJET ONCE MORE SOARS ON THE OUTER EDGES OF THE POLEMACHUIAN ENERGY RINGS...
WE HAVE ARRIVED AT THE PROPER CO-ORDINATES, NATASHA...
...EXACTLY 2.3 KILOMETERS ABOVE THE EQUIVALENT OF THE RINGS' CHROMOSPHERE.
I ASSUME THAT'S OUR CUE.
IT IS, SERSI.
IT'S MOMENTS LIKE THESE I MISS CAPTAIN AMERICA THE MOST...
...HE'D KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY. THE ELOQUENCE WOULD BE INSPIRING. HIS WORDS COMFORTING. I DON'T HAVE HIS TALENT...
"...WHAT I CAN SAY IS SIMPLE AND PLAIN... BUT HEARTFELT...
"...DOS VADANYA, MY FRIENDS."
WELL, AT LEAST IT WAS TO THE POINT.
I, FOR ONE, FOUND CAPTAIN AMERICA'S SPEECHES A TAD TEDIOUS AT TIMES.
SERSI, I REALLY DON'T THINK NOW'S THE TIME FOR CRITIQUES, OKAY?
HERK?
ARKON AND I ARE ABOUT OUR APPOINTED TASK, GOOD KNIGHT.
GOOD.
CRYSTAL, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
OF COURSE, DANE.
I JUST FIND OPERATING IN DEEP SPACE DISORIENTING AT TIMES.

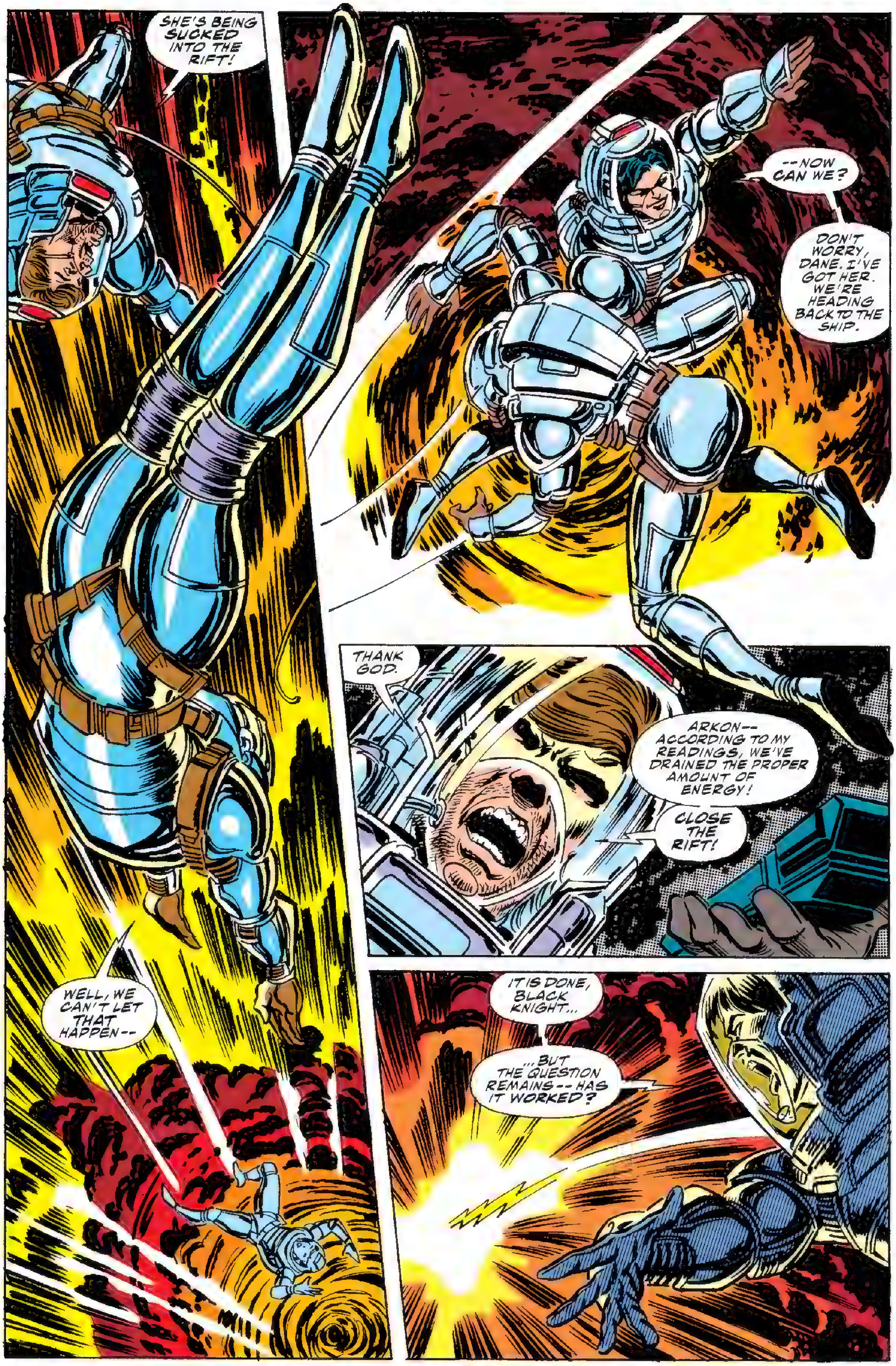
WHO DOESN'T?
SERSE, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?
YOU MUST HAVE FAITH, DARLING...
...YOU KNOW, SOME OF US ARE NEVER DISORIENTED.
I SEE SERSI'S IN ONE OF HER MORE CHARMING MOODS.
SHE'S JUST TENSE AND SHE'S HIDING IT.
IT'S TIME, CRYS.
DANE, I'VE NEVER USED MY POWERS LIKE THIS.
ARE YOU SURE--?
I HAVEN'T BEEN SURE SINCE THE DAY I WAS BORN, BUT...
...AS I UNDERSTAND THEM, YOUR ABILITIES WORK ON A MOLECULAR LEVEL...
...THAT'S ALL WE NEED 'EM TO DO.
THEN...
...AS YOU WOULD SAY...
...I'LL LET 'EM RIP!

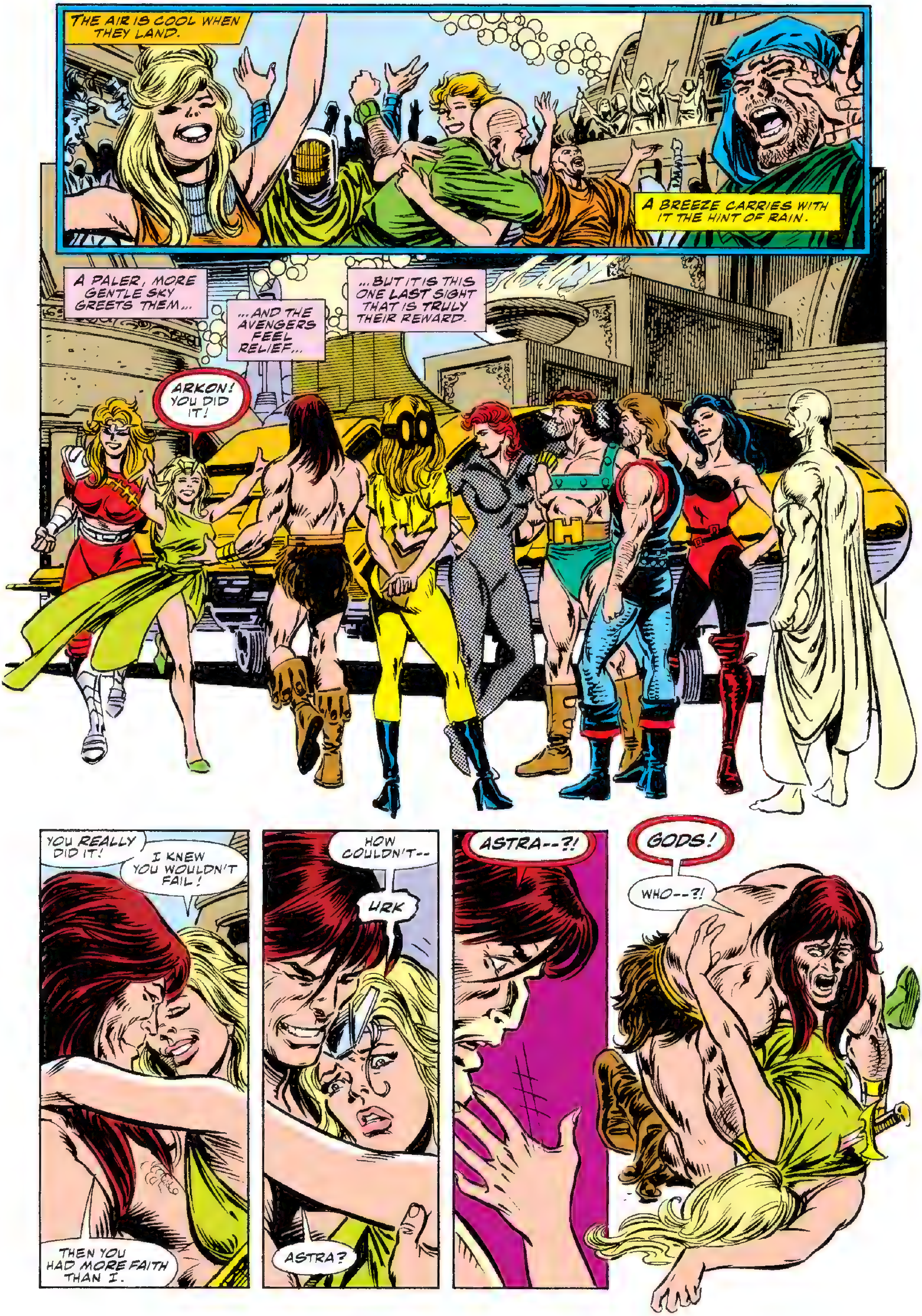

AND THE INHUMAN ELEMENTAL UNLEASHES A POWER THAT IS THE PRODUCT OF GENERATIONS OF GENETIC PLANNING AND CAREFUL BREEDING...
...A POWER THAT STRIKES DEEP INTO THE FLAMING CAULDRON BELOW...
...SEEKING OUT ITS MOLECULAR COMPOSITION...
...PROBING...
...CHARGING...
DANE!
IT'S NO GOOD -- THE ENERGY PATTERNS ARE TOO DIFFERENT--
I--DON'T--THINK--
THEN DON'T THINK, CRYSTAL--
--JUST DO!!
DANE, OUR SCANNERS ARE PICKING UP A MASSIVE INCREASE IN THE RINGS' ACTIVITY IN YOUR IMMEDIATE VICINITY.
INDEED.
IT IS HAPPENING MUCH FASTER THAN OUR PREDICTIONS ANTICIPATED.
I KNEW SHE COULD DO IT! I KNEW IT!
HOLD ON, CRYS-- JUST HOLD ON!

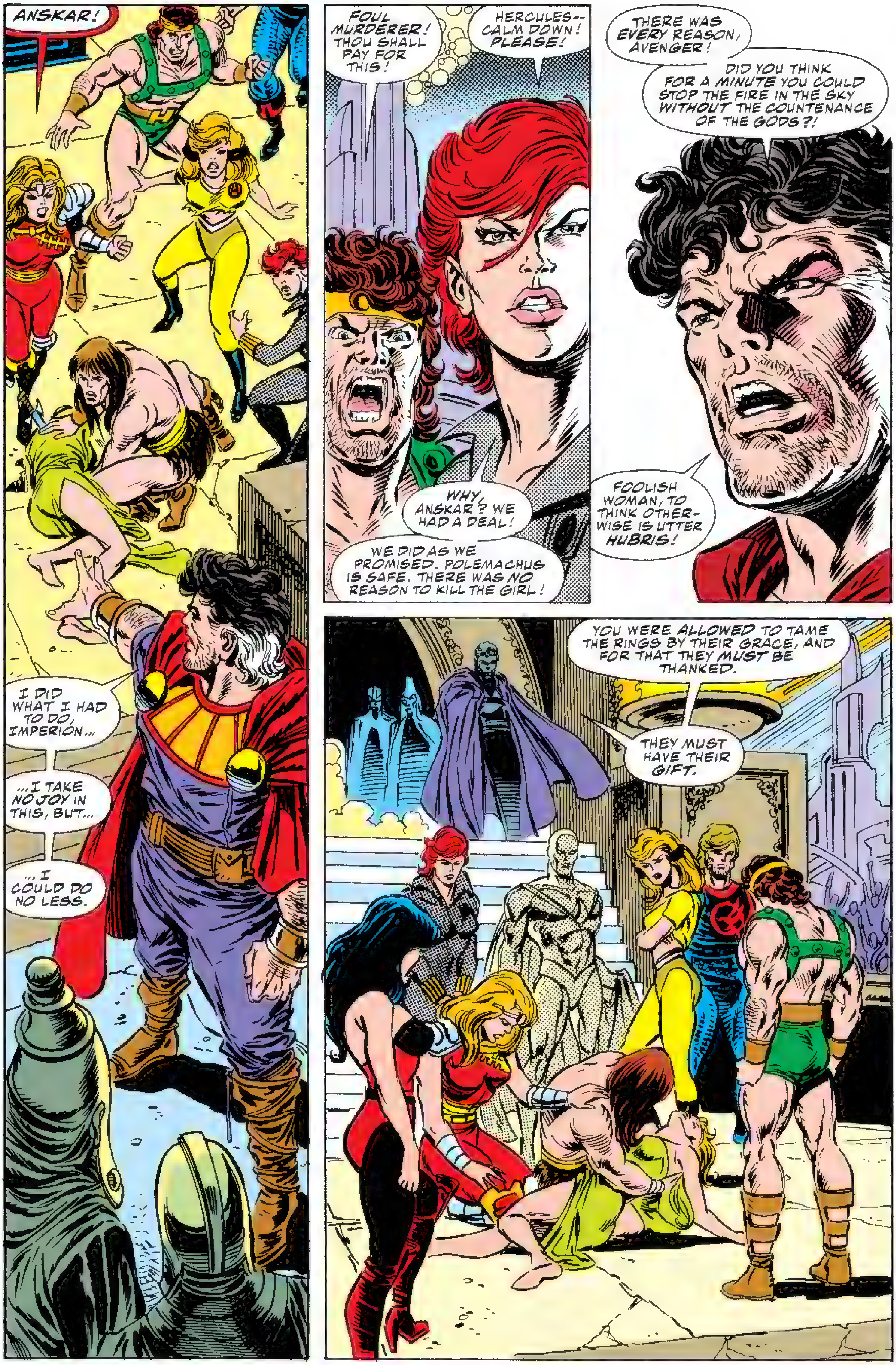

IT'S HAPPENING! IT'S--
YES!!
YOU DID IT, SWEETHEART! YOU DID IT!
YOU CREATED AN HONEST-TO-PETE ENERGY FLARE!!
SERSI-- YOUR MOVE! NOW!
TAPPING INTO THE COSMIC POWER THAT IS HER BIRTHRIGHT, THE ETERNAL CONCENTRATES ON THE EXPLODING, ERUPTING ENERGY...
...AS HER MIND BEGINS TO OPERATE ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL, WHERE THE SUB-ATOMIC LATTICES GLOW BRIGHT AND PURE.
AS IF ON A FAR SHORE, SHE HEARS THE BLACK KNIGHT URGING HER ON...
...AND HOW SHE MUST FIGHT THE URGE TO RUSH TO HIM, TO EMBRACE HIM...
...BUT SHE DOES NOT. THERE IS MUCH SHE MUST DO.
AND WITH AN ARTIST'S SKILL, WITH A CREATOR'S LOVE, SHE DELICATELY RE-WEAVES GRAVITONIC FIELDS AND GENTLY ORCHESTRATES MOLECULAR MOVEMENTS...
...AND GIVES TO AN UNDIRECTED EXPLOSION OF ENERGY BOTH FORM AND DESTINATION...


DANE -- I CAN'T MAINTAIN THE FLARE -- MUCH LONGER --
YOU WON'T HAVE TO, CRYS.
HERK -- ARKON -- IT'S TIME!
YOU HEARD DANE WHITMAN, IMPERION...
AND INTO THE HEART OF THE ENERGY-STREAM ARKON THE IMPERION THROWS HIS GOLDEN THUNDERBOLT...
...DO WHAT THOU MUST DO -- AND DO IT QUICKLY!
...WHERE IT EXPLODES...
...RIPPING A HOLE IN THE FABRIC OF TIME AND SPACE...
...AND SUDDENLY, THE STREAM BECOMES A TORRENT AS IT ROARS INTO THE PORTAL, SUCKED INTO THE RIFT, LIKE WATER DOWN A DRAIN.
COME, ARKON --
-- THIS BE NO PLACE FOR MAN NOR GOD!

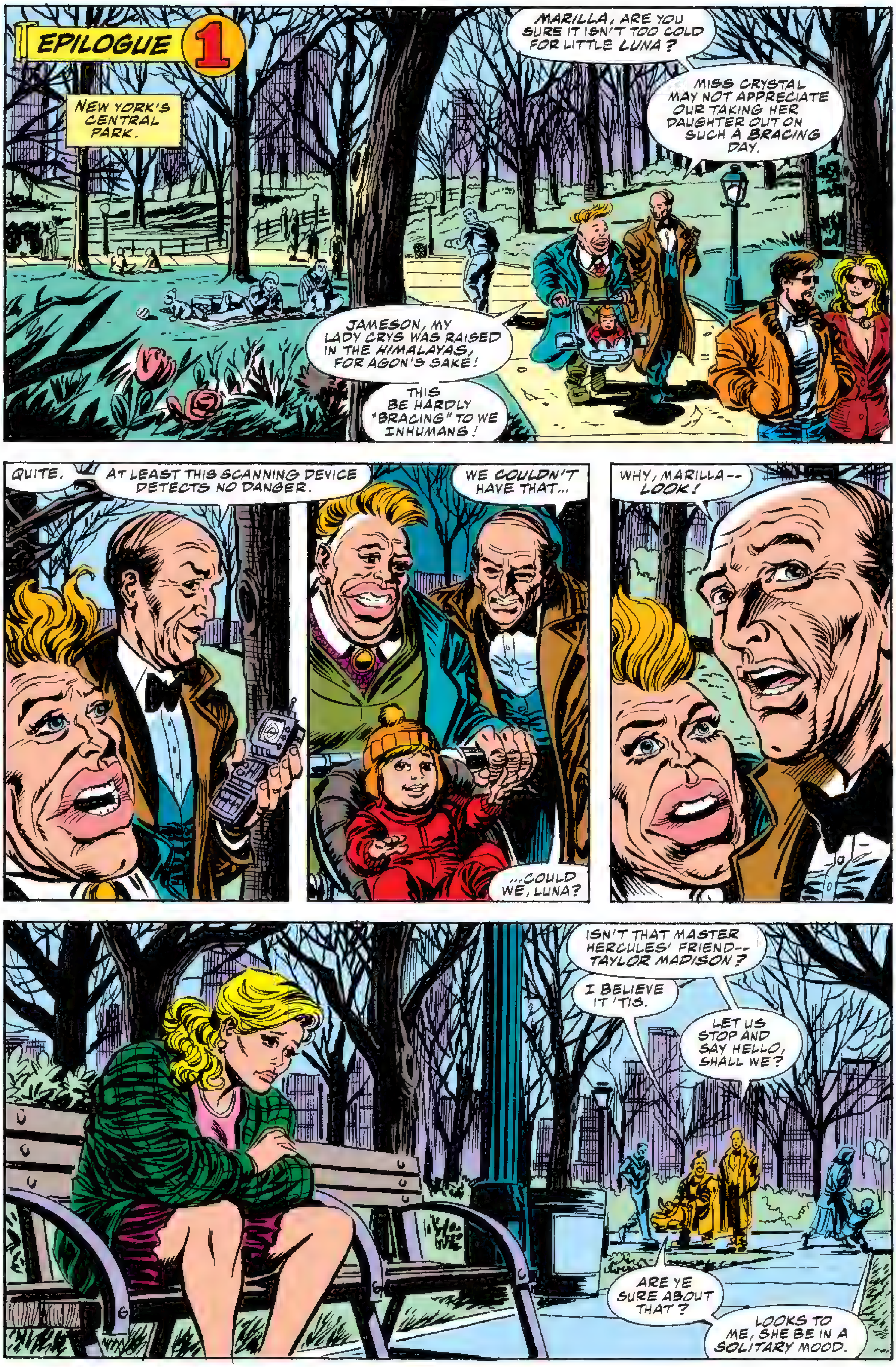
OBOY
THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL INTO THE PORTAL IS INCREDIBLE!
SERSI! GET BACK HERE-- NOW!
AND ON THE PLANET'S SURFACE...
...A BILLION PEOPLE LOOK UP...
...TO SEE THE BRIGHT SKY FLICKER...
...AND RIPPLE FROM HORIZON TO HORIZON.
AND SOME FEEL FEAR...
...OTHERS AWE...
...AND A FEW...
...A VERY FEW...
...DARE TO HOPE.
ABOVE...
THE TETHER--!
DEAR GOD-- NO!
CRYSTAL!

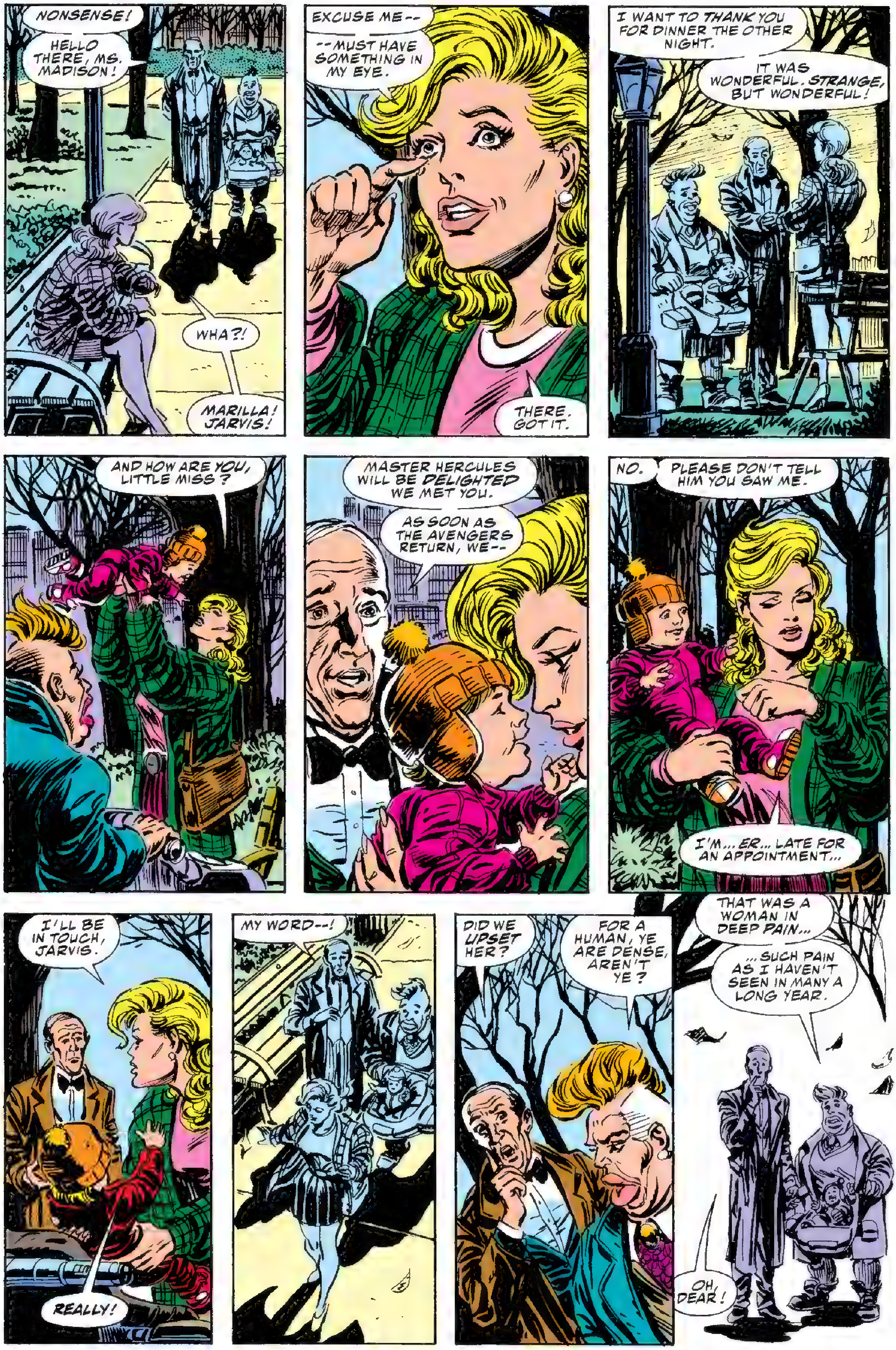

SHE'S BEING SUCKED INTO THE RIFT!
WELL, WE CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN--
--NOW CAN WE?
DON'T WORRY, DANE. I'VE GOT HER. WE'RE HEADING BACK TO THE SHIP.
THANK GOD.
ARKON-- ACCORDING TO MY READINGS, WE'VE DRAINED THE PROPER AMOUNT OF ENERGY!
CLOSE THE RIFT!
IT IS DONE, BLACK KNIGHT...
...BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS-- HAS IT WORKED?

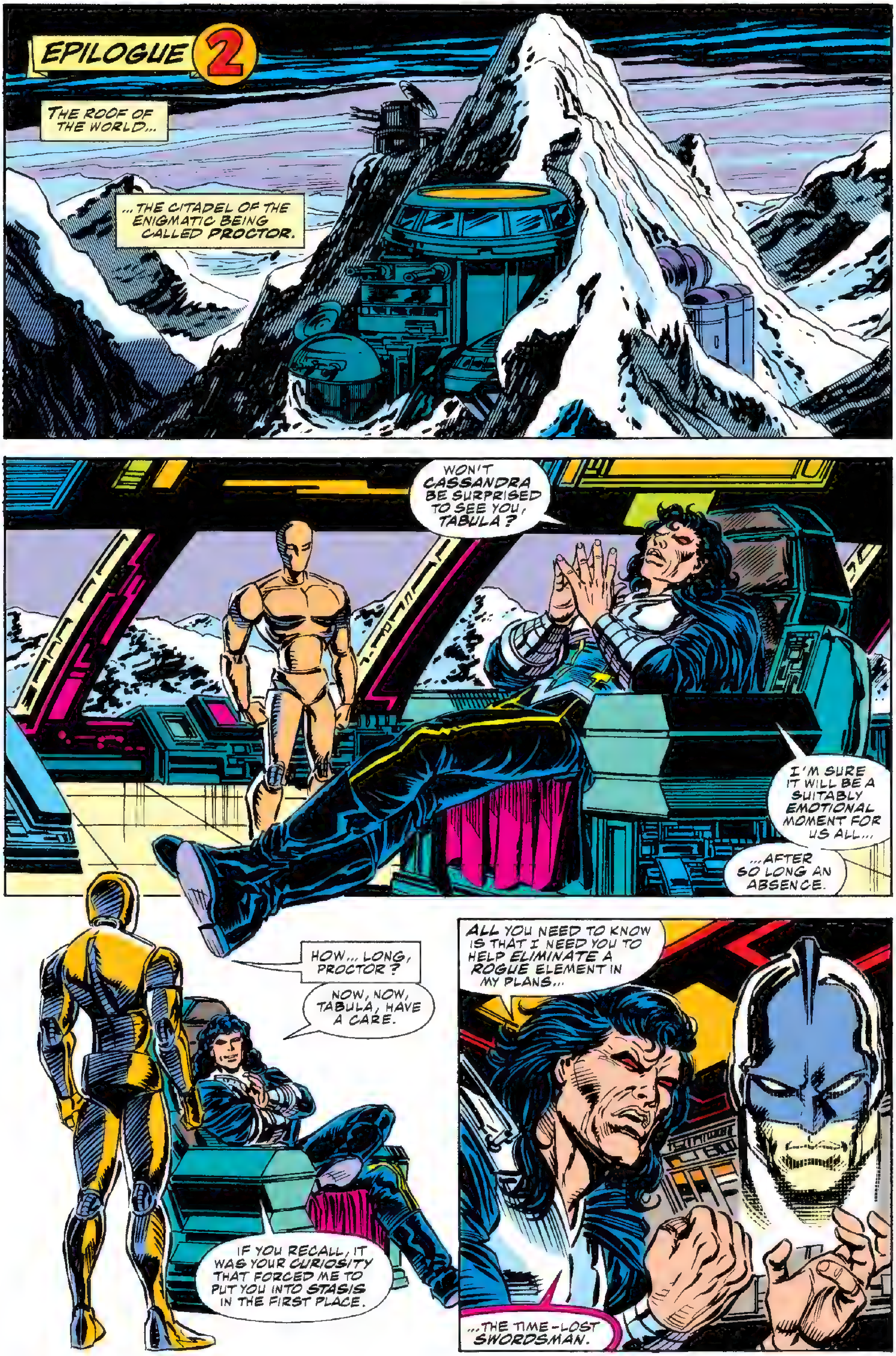

THE AIR IS COOL WHEN THEY LAND.
A BREEZE CARRIES WITH IT THE HINT OF RAIN.
A PALER, MORE GENTLE SKY GREETS THEM...
...AND THE AVENGERS FEEL RELIEF...
...BUT IT IS THIS ONE LAST SIGHT THAT IS TRULY THEIR REWARD.
ARKON! YOU DID IT!
YOU REALLY DID IT!
I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T FAIL!
THEN YOU HAD MORE FAITH THAN I.
HOW COULDN'T--
URK
ASTRA?
ASTRA--?!
GODS!
WHO--?!


ANSKAR!
I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO, IMPERION...
...I TAKE NO JOY IN THIS, BUT...
...I COULD DO NO LESS.
FOUL MURDERER! THOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS!
HERCULES-- CALM DOWN! PLEASE!
WHY, ANSKAR? WE HAD A DEAL!
WE DID AS WE PROMISED. POLEMACHUS IS SAFE. THERE WAS NO REASON TO KILL THE GIRL!
THERE WAS EVERY REASON, AVENGER!
DID YOU THINK FOR A MINUTE YOU COULD STOP THE FIRE IN THE SKY WITHOUT THE COUNTENANCE OF THE GODS?!
FOOLISH WOMAN, TO THINK OTHERWISE IS UTTER HUBRIS!
YOU WERE ALLOWED TO TAME THE RINGS BY THEIR GRACE, AND FOR THAT THEY MUST BE THANKED.
THEY MUST HAVE THEIR GIFT.

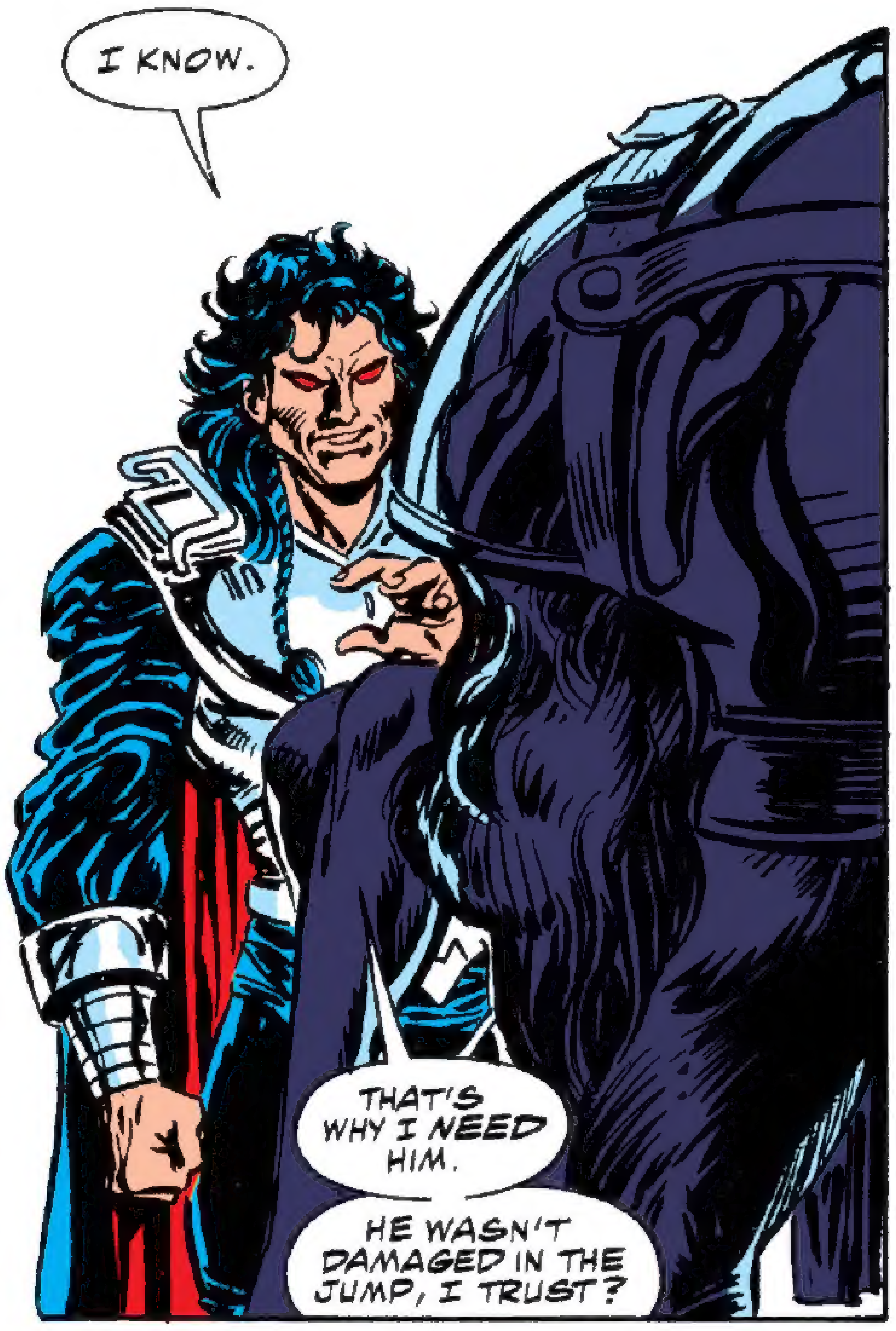
REALLY, ANSKAR?
THEN WHY, PRAY TELL--
--STOP AT JUST ONE?!
VZZZZ
AAARGH!
SWEET AGON...
SERSE!
SERSI --DEAR GOD--
--DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE?!
OF COURSE, NATASHA.
I WAS AN AVENGER!
FIN

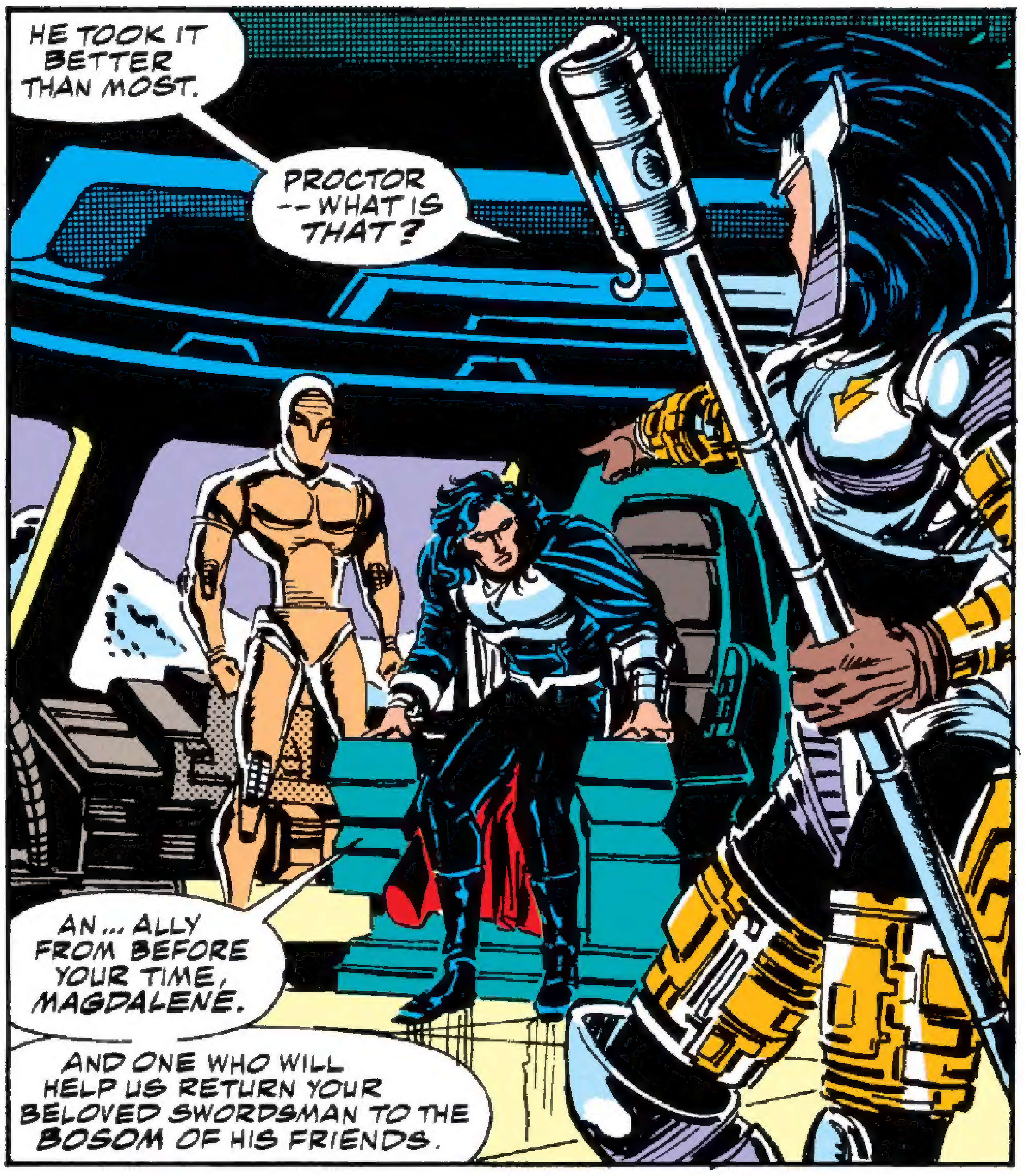

EPILOGUE 1
NEW YORK'S CENTRAL PARK.
MARILLA, ARE YOU SURE IT ISN'T TOO COLD FOR LITTLE LUNA?
MISS CRYSTAL MAY NOT APPRECIATE OUR TAKING HER DAUGHTER OUT ON SUCH A BRACING DAY.
JAMESON, MY LADY CRYS WAS RAISED IN THE HIMALAYAS, FOR AGON'S SAKE!
THIS BE HARDLY "BRACING" TO WE INHUMANS!
QUITE.
AT LEAST THIS SCANNING DEVICE DETECTS NO DANGER.
WE COULDN'T HAVE THAT...
...COULD WE, LUNA?
WHY, MARILLA-- LOOK!
ISN'T THAT MASTER HERCULES' FRIEND-- TAYLOR MADISON?
I BELIEVE IT 'TIS.
LET US STOP AND SAY HELLO, SHALL WE?
ARE YE SURE ABOUT THAT?
LOOKS TO ME, SHE BE IN A SOLITARY MOOD.

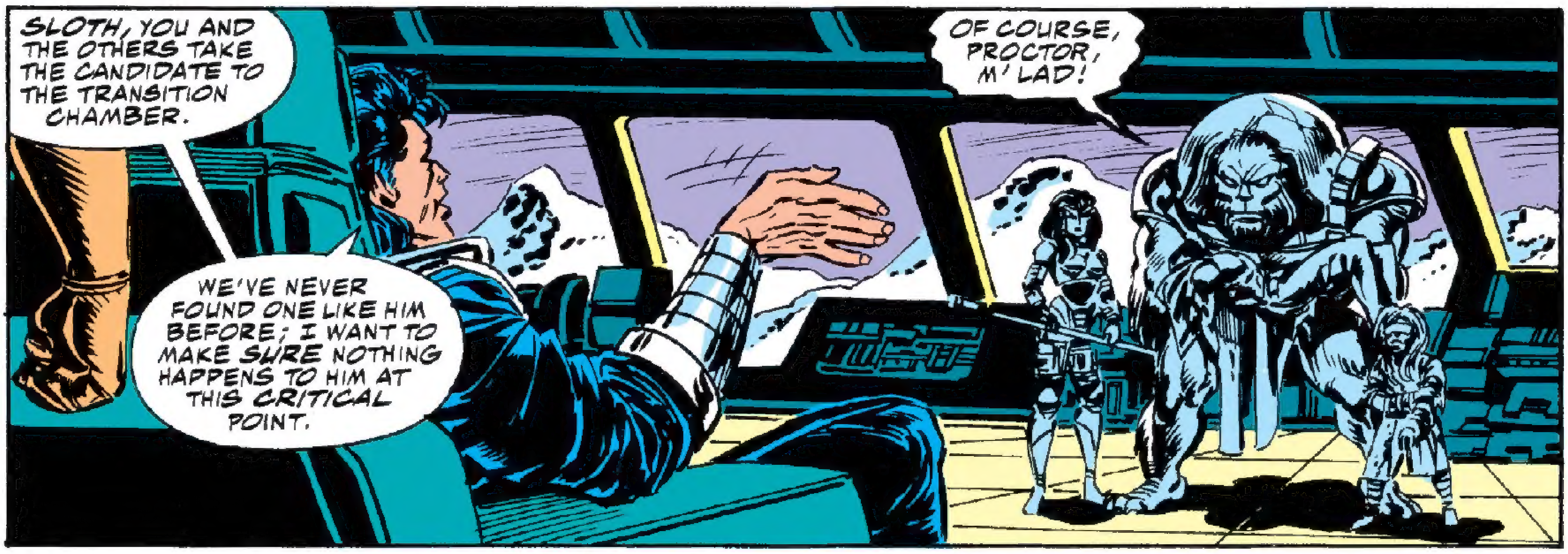

NONSENSE!
HELLO THERE, MS. MADISON!
WHA?!
MARILLA! JARVIS!
EXCUSE ME--
--MUST HAVE SOMETHING IN MY EYE.
THERE. GOT IT.
I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR DINNER THE OTHER NIGHT.
IT WAS WONDERFUL. STRANGE, BUT WONDERFUL!
AND HOW ARE YOU, LITTLE MISS?
MASTER HERCULES WILL BE DELIGHTED WE MET YOU.
AS SOON AS THE AVENGERS RETURN, WE--
NO.
PLEASE DON'T TELL HIM YOU SAW ME.
I'M... ER... LATE FOR AN APPOINTMENT...
I'LL BE IN TOUCH, JARVIS.
REALLY!
MY WORD--!
DID WE UPSET HER?
FOR A HUMAN, YE ARE DENSE, AREN'T YE?
THAT WAS A WOMAN IN DEEP PAIN...
...SUCH PAIN AS I HAVEN'T SEEN IN MANY A LONG YEAR.
OH, DEAR!

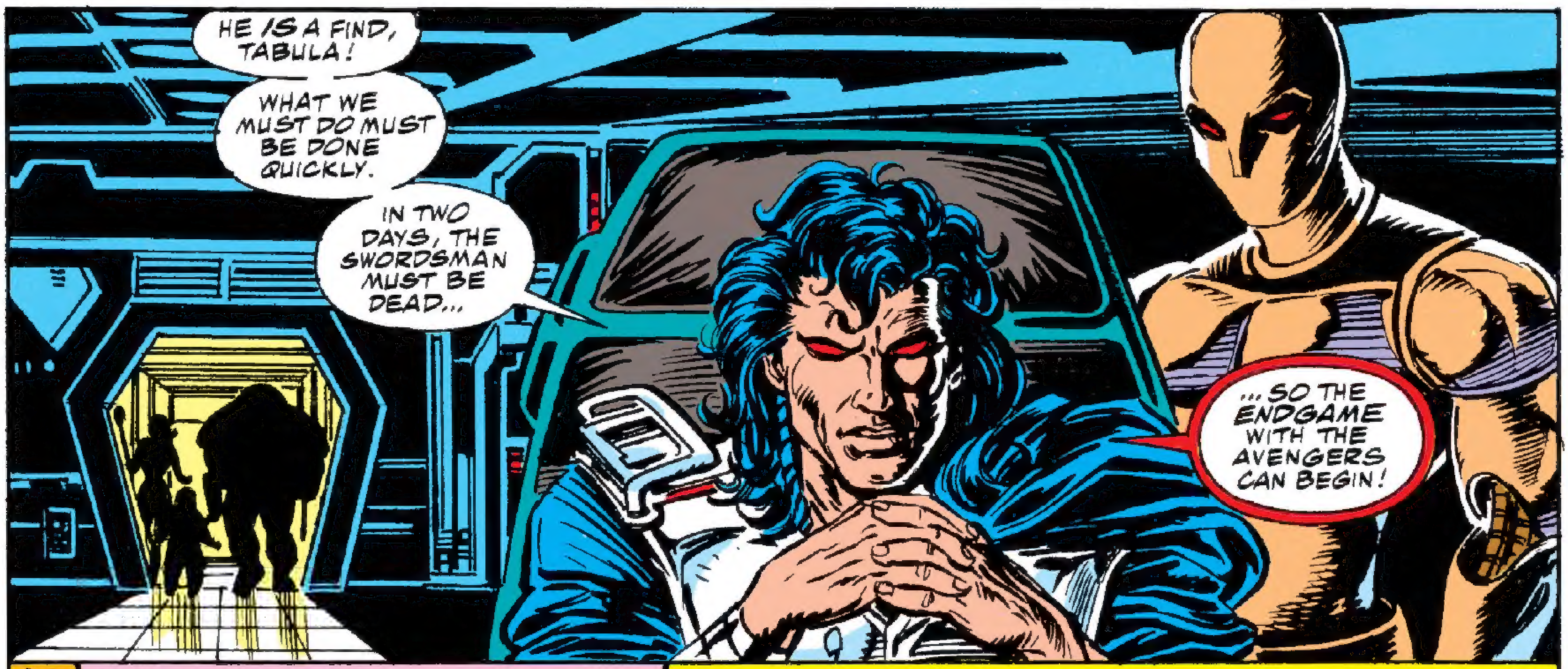

EPILOGUE 2
THE ROOF OF THE WORLD...
...THE CITADEL OF THE ENIGMATIC BEING CALLED PROCTOR.
WON'T CASSANDRA BE SURPRISED TO SEE YOU, TABULA?
I'M SURE IT WILL BE A SUITABLY EMOTIONAL MOMENT FOR US ALL...
...AFTER SO LONG AN ABSENCE.
HOW... LONG, PROCTOR?
NOW, NOW, TABULA, HAVE A CARE.
IF YOU RECALL, IT WAS YOUR CURIOSITY THAT FORCED ME TO PUT YOU INTO STASIS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT I NEED YOU TO HELP ELIMINATE A ROGUE ELEMENT IN MY PLANS...
...THE TIME-LOST SWORDSMAN.

AND HERE COME THE OTHER GATHERERS...
WMMMMMMM
...AND WITH THEM, HOPEFULLY...
"...THE FINAL COMPONENT IN MY PLAN."
BY THE NEBULA, PROCTOR!
HE'S A DEVIL, THIS ONE! HE NEARLY KILLED US ALL!
THE GIRL'S RIGHT, PROCTOR!
HE'S A MADMAN!


I KNOW.
THAT'S WHY I *NEED* HIM.
HE WASN'T DAMAGED IN THE JUMP, I TRUST?


HE TOOK IT BETTER THAN MOST.
PROCTOR --WHAT IS *THAT?*
AN... ALLY FROM BEFORE YOUR TIME, *MAGDALENE*.
AND ONE WHO WILL HELP US RETURN YOUR BELOVED SWORDSMAN TO THE *BOSOM* OF HIS FRIENDS.

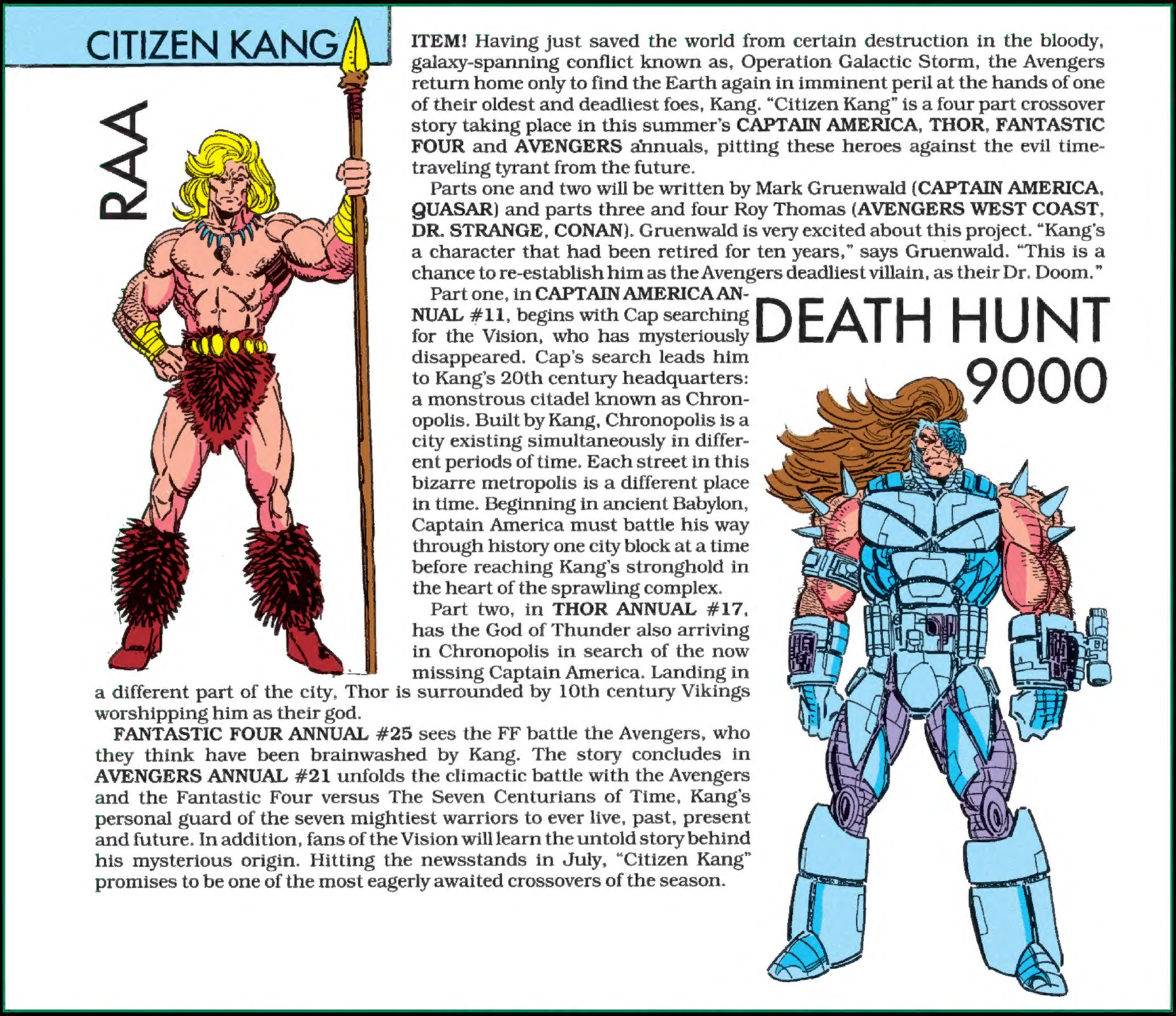

SLOTH, YOU AND THE OTHERS TAKE THE CANDIDATE TO THE TRANSITION CHAMBER.
WE'VE NEVER FOUND ONE LIKE HIM BEFORE; I WANT TO MAKE *SURE* NOTHING HAPPENS TO HIM AT THIS *CRITICAL* POINT.
OF COURSE, PROCTOR, M' LAD!


HE *IS* A FIND, TABULA!
WHAT WE MUST DO MUST BE DONE QUICKLY.
IN TWO DAYS, THE SWORDSMAN MUST BE DEAD...
...SO THE *ENDGAME* WITH THE AVENGERS CAN BEGIN!

NEXT

A DOUBLE-SIZED SPECTACULAR! CAPTAIN AMERICA RETURNS AS THE AVENGERS BEGIN TO FALL APART!

ALTERNATE VISIONS!



CITIZEN KANG

ITEM! Having just saved the world from certain destruction in the bloody, galaxy-spanning conflict known as, Operation Galactic Storm, the Avengers return home only to find the Earth again in imminent peril at the hands of one of their oldest and deadliest foes, Kang. "Citizen Kang" is a four part crossover story taking place in this summer's **CAPTAIN AMERICA**, **THOR**, **FANTASTIC FOUR** and **AVENGERS** annuals, pitting these heroes against the evil time-traveling tyrant from the future.

Parts one and two will be written by Mark Gruenwald (**CAPTAIN AMERICA**, **QUASAR**) and parts three and four Roy Thomas (**AVENGERS WEST COAST**, **DR. STRANGE**, **CONAN**). Gruenwald is very excited about this project. "Kang's a character that had been retired for ten years," says Gruenwald. "This is a chance to re-establish him as the Avengers deadliest villain, as their Dr. Doom."

Part one, in **CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #11**, begins with Cap searching for the Vision, who has mysteriously disappeared. Cap's search leads him to Kang's 20th century headquarters: a monstrous citadel known as Chronopolis. Built by Kang, Chronopolis is a city existing simultaneously in different periods of time. Each street in this bizarre metropolis is a different place in time. Beginning in ancient Babylon, Captain America must battle his way through history one city block at a time before reaching Kang's stronghold in the heart of the sprawling complex.

Part two, in **THOR ANNUAL #17**, has the God of Thunder also arriving in Chronopolis in search of the now missing Captain America. Landing in a different part of the city, Thor is surrounded by 10th century Vikings worshipping him as their god.

FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #25 sees the FF battle the Avengers, who they think have been brainwashed by Kang. The story concludes in **AVENGERS ANNUAL #21** unfolds the climactic battle with the Avengers and the Fantastic Four versus The Seven Centurians of Time, Kang's personal guard of the seven mightiest warriors to ever live, past, present and future. In addition, fans of the Vision will learn the untold story behind his mysterious origin. Hitting the newsstands in July, "Citizen Kang" promises to be one of the most eagerly awaited crossovers of the season.

MARVEL AGE #115 ARTICLES
WITH CHARACTER DESIGNS BY DAN PANOSIAN

"HOT SHEET"

ARTICLE EXCERPT BY JERRY NOVICK

AVENGERS #350, BESIDES SPORTING A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE NUMBER, FEATURES A HOST OF ALL-STAR GUESTS AS THE STARJAMMERS (OF *X-MEN* FAME) STORM AVENGERS MANSION IN SEARCH OF THEIR FORMER TEAMMATE, BINARY (WHO USED TO BE MS. MARVEL OF THE AVENGERS). AND IF THE STARJAMMERS ARE THERE, LED BY SCOTT SUMMERS' FATHER, CAN CYCLOPS AND A FEW OTHER X-FOLK BE FAR BEHIND?

THIS BIG-TIME STORY COULDN'T HAVE COME AT A BETTER TIME, ACCORDING TO [GEORGIA RETAILER] CLIFF BIGGERS. "*AVENGERS #350* WILL BUILD ON THE FIRE STARTED BY THE 'GALACTIC STORM' STORYLINE. THE X-MEN GUEST APPEARANCE WILL GUARANTEE THAT THIS ONE'S A HIT TOO." MARVEL EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND *CAPTAIN AMERICA* SCRIBE MARK GRUENWALD ADDED THAT HE, TOO, WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS SPECIAL ISSUE "BECAUSE, WITH BOB HARRAS' UNIQUE POSITION AS THE EDITOR OF *X-MEN* AND WRITER OF *AVENGERS*, HE IS WITH THIS ISSUE COORDINATING AND INTERWEAVING TWO CONTINUITIES THAT SHOULD HAVE MORE INTERACTION THAN THEY HAVE."

[CONNECTICUT RETAILER] MIKE RAUB SUMMED UP THE IMPORTANCE OF *AVENGERS #350*: "PART OF THE JOB OF BEING A COMIC FAN IS BEING A HISTORY BUFF AS WELL...[BUT] BESIDES THE INTERESTING STORIES, THE DELUXE GATEFOLD COVERS OF *AVENGERS #350* WILL GIVE NEW FANS THE LICENSE TO DROOL OVER A MAJOR CHUNK OF MARVEL ART FROM THE PAST."

WHEN COME THE GATHERERS!

First, the machinations of Hera and Ares pit Hercules against Thor! A visit from the Starjammers and the X-Men proves painful for the Black Knight — and so do his feelings for Crystal and Sersi! And the demonic return of a classic villain teaches the Avengers to fear the Grim Reaper — not to mention his shambling Legion of the Unliving! Then, the Gatherers — Proctor, Magdalene and the Swordsman, plus Sloth and Cassandra — attack at last! But what is the secret behind their dastardly plan — and why is their next target the Black Panther? Plus: The Avengers aid Arkon! And Captain America, Thor and the Fantastic Four are drawn into the time-travel saga of Citizen Kang!

VOLUME
23
1992-1993

MARVEL
EPIC
T

AVENGERS #348-359 & ANNUAL #21; AND MATERIAL FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #11, THOR ANNUAL #17 & FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #25

The Epic Collections feature the best characters and stories from Marvel's vast history. Volumes are not published in chronological order — so start your collection today with this edition!

ZONE